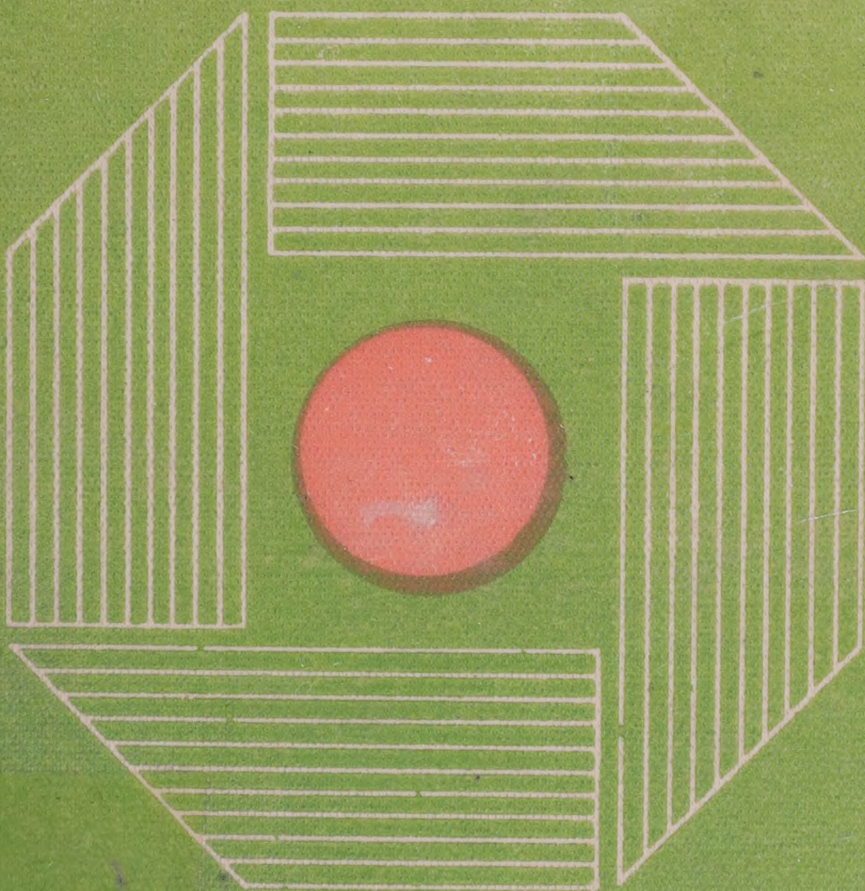


Indian Society



R. N. SHARMA

✓ ✓

INDIAN SOCIETY

INDIAN SOCIETY

.....

RAMNATH SHARMA

D. Phil. (Alld.), D. Litt. (Meerut)

Reader & Head, Dept. of P. G. Studies & Research
Meerut College, Meerut University.

MPP

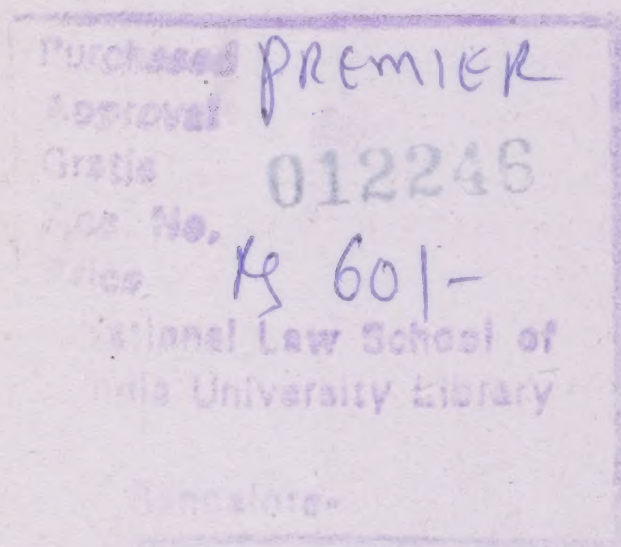
**MEDIA PROMOTERS AND PUBLISHERS PVT. LTD.
BOMBAY**

301
94A

© 1981 by R. N. SHARMA

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Reprinted 1987
Reprinted 1991



ISBN 81.85099.03.0

Printed in India

At Rang Bharati, Todi Estate, Sun-Mill Compound, Lower Parel,
Bombay-400 013 and published by Mrs Lily Jayasinghe
for Media Promoters & Publishers Pvt. Ltd., Bombay-400 007.

PREFACE

Scores of books have been written by western and Indian scholars on different aspects of Indian Society, social institutions, culture, religion etc. Books have also been written on the philosophical basis, social structure, customs and ceremonies of Hindus, Muslims, Christians and Tribals in India. This is amply clear by the Bibliography of original works and secondary sources given at the end of the present work. A student of Indian Society, culture and social institutions, is therefore, required to master at least a dozen books. The present work is an attempt to present a comprehensive but brief discussion of Indian Society, social institutions, social change, contemporary Indian social conditions etc. in a single volume. It will, therefore serve as one book, by mastering which, the reader may have at least a workable command over all these topics. Those who are desirous of wide study may go through the books included in the bibliography given at the end of this book. However, even for them, before they actually study any element of Indian society in details, it is necessary to master this one book to have a grasp of the fundamental concepts and their essentials.

Thus the present work has been planned to serve as an ideal text book for undergraduate and post graduate students of Indian society, Indian social institutions, contemporary Indian society, contemporary social change in India, prescribed in the syllabi of different Indian universities. The author has consulted almost all the syllabi of the Indian universities in planning the outline of this work. Again, the method of presentation has been planned with the aim of providing first rate material from the point of view of evaluation system in Indian universities. The readers will easily find complete and detailed answers to most of the questions asked in their examinations. Thus both from the point of view of subject matter and the method of presentation the author has used his teaching experience of more than two decades to create a work which may serve the purpose of the university students of Sociology in India.

PREFACE

The presentation of this work is analytic, with headings, side headings and sub-headings so that a topic may be elucidated in its minutest details. The approach in controversial matters has been generally integral, doing justice to all the points of view, showing both the advantages and disadvantages and finally maintaining a comprehensive, multisided, integral view-point. The author's own view-point of evaluation in all his works has been avowedly integral. He has clarified this method in scores of his books. To his mind, sociological studies must be based upon facts but the method of critical evaluation required rising above the immediate facts and adopting a synoptic, total and comprehensive view point.

Thus the present work is a text book meant for Indian universities. However, it will be equally useful for teachers of sociology as well as for all those persons, social workers, political leaders and even for the laymen who require a preliminary understanding of Indian society, social institutions, social change, social problems and ways and means of social amelioration. Suggestions for further improvement will be most welcome.

"Archana"
Civil Lines
Meerut-250001

Ram Nath Sharma

CONTENTS

Preface

1.	INDIAN CULTURE AND SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY	...	1
2.	HINDU SOCIAL SYSTEM AND INSTITUTIONS : THE PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF HINDU SOCIAL ORGANIZATION — VARNASHRAM SYSTEM	...	17
3.	MUSLIM SOCIAL SYSTEM AND INSTITUTIONS	...	91
4.	TRIBAL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS	...	104
5.	CHRISTIAN SOCIAL SYSTEM AND INSTITUTIONS	...	139
6.	RURAL SOCIAL SYSTEMS AND INSTITUTIONS	...	147
7.	MEDIEVAL SOCIAL REFORM MOVEMENTS	...	250
8.	MODERN RENAISSANCE AND REFORM MOVEMENTS	...	250
9.	SOCIAL CHANGE IN CONTEMPORARY INDIAN SOCIETY	...	305
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	...	406
	<i>Index</i>	...	417

CHAPTER 1

INDIAN CULTURE AND SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY

Indian social thought bears an indelible stamp of Indian culture. It imbibes ages old philosophical traditions of the land. Most of the contemporary Indian social thinkers are idealist thinkers. Sri Aurobindo, Vivekananda, Radhakrishnan, Tagore, Gandhi and Bhagwandas all interpret the world as the play and evolution of Spirit. Matter, life and mind are the manifestations of the Spirit in the world. Spirit is not a substance but life itself. In the words of Radhakrishnan, "It is the basis and background of our being, the universality that cannot be reduced to this or that formula." The search of contemporary Indian philosophers, like the ancient Indian Upanishadic philosophers, is the realization of Brahman. Brahman is the fullest expression of Spirit of which the self and God are manifestations. "The work of philosophy," as Sri Aurobindo aptly puts it, "is to arrange the data given by the various means of knowledge, excluding none, and put them into a synthetic relation to one truth, the one supreme and universal reality."² Similar quotations can be traced in the works of Radhakrishnan, Vivekananda, Ramakrishna, Tagore, Gandhi and Bhagwandas. All these contemporary Indian social thinkers have acclaimed ancient Vedanta philosophy as the basis of their philosophical ideas. They are neo-vedantist and the absolute idealism of Vedanta is their *locus standi*.

Salient Features of Indian Culture

Now, in order to prove that Indian social philosophy bears an indelible stamp of Indian culture, it will be relevant to cast an eye over the salient features of Indian culture. The most important salient features of Indian culture are as follows:

1. *Spiritual Goal of Life*

The basic aim of Indian culture is self realization. Its originators, the seers and mendicants, arrived at the conclusion that the primary duty of man is to know himself because that is the only way in which the truth of this world and hereafter can be known. It is for this reason that Indian Sadhana emphasised introversion. Sri Aurobindo has rightly stated that spirituality is the key to understand Indian mind. It is this spirituality which has helped Indian culture to retain its originality in the world culture. Spirituality is one field in which Indian culture has led all the rest. The orthodox and heterodox schools of thought in Indian culture are generally imbued with spirituality. In contemporary Indian philosophy the ultimate reality has been called Spirit. World is the evolution of Spirit. This evolution, according to Sri Aurobindo, Radhakrishnan, Bhagwandas and others is spiral in nature, because that is the characteristic process of the spiritual dynamism. To quote Bhagwandas, "The words 'Evolution' and 'Involution' embody, with instinctive correctness, the idea that these processes are forth and back, circling and cycling in a spiral." ³ This spiral is the integral movement characteristic of the Spirit.

2. *Synthetic Approach to Religion*

A religious orientation has been characteristic of Indian culture since ancient times. In Indian social thought the concept of *Dharma* has been the basic idea in different fields of society. This idea explains the functions of different human beings, social institutions and associations. It is the thread which ties the Indian thought together. Some people have wrongly interpreted this religious orientation as escapism. Indian seers believed in a synthetic relation between this world and the world hereafter. Religious tolerance and synthetic approach has been characteristic of Indian religion. Aryans, the founders of Indian culture, emphasised upon the assimilation of foreign elements in indigenous culture. Even the inner revolts as that of Buddhism which arose within it gradually subsided and merged into it. Hinduism, the essence of Indian culture, had accepted many different religions into its fold and has only gained by it.

This synthetic approach in Indian culture has been expressed in synthetic approach to religion found among contemporary Indian

social thinkers. Contemporary Indian thinkers including Sri Aurobindo, Radhakrishnan, Bhagwandas, Vivekananda, Tagore and Gandhi exhibit an integral viewpoint in their synthetic approach to religion. They have pointed out the contribution of each great religion to humanity and emphasised their fundamental unity. In the words of Rabindranath Tagore, "These religions differ in details and often in their moral significance, but they have a common tendency. In them men seek their own supreme value which they call divine, in some personality anthropomorphic in character."⁴ In his *Religion of Man* Tagore emphasised humanism as the core of all religions. He pointed out essential similarity in the teachings of the pioneers of all religions.

Ramakrishna has pointed out in so many words that God is one though his forms are many.⁵ He proves this contention by examples of changing colours of chamaleon, the elephant and blind men and toys of sugar and clay etc. Devotees have seen the same God in different relationships. Therefore, Ramakrishna has pleaded for the removal of all hatred and differences. It is useless to distinguish among human beings on the basis of religious sects.

Mahatma Gandhi has pleaded for toleration and catholicity. "I believe Hinduism to be a religion of truth but Islam and Christianity also are religions of truth. From your standpoint Christianity is true: Hinduism from my standpoint."⁶ "The essence of all religions is one; only their approaches are different."⁷ Thus, according to Gandhi, religions differ only in non-essentials while in essentials they agree. He points out to the essential unity of all religions. Just as God is one though his names are different, religion is also one inspite of its different names; because all religions have been derived from God. One can find similar idea in the words of Sri Aurobindo and Bhagwandas, Radhakrishnan and Vivekananda. In his *Essential Unity of All Religions* Bhagwandas has summarised points of agreements of world religions. In his *Eastern Religion and Western Thought* Radhakrishnan searched the heart of each great religion to discover the intuitive basis from which it springs and thus finds out their unity in integral intuition.

Thus contemporary Indian social thinkers emphasise harmony between various religions but not the abolition of their diversity. Like Wm. James, said Sri Aurobindo, "A religion which is itself a congeries of religion and which at the same time provides each man

with his own turn of inner experience, would be the most in consonance with this purpose of Nature; it would be a rich nursery of spiritual growth and flowering, a vast multiform school of soul's discipline, endeavour and self realisation." ⁸

3. *Unity in Diversity*

One finds a fundamental unity in Indian culture that can possibly elude if one concerns himself only with the external aspects of it, the individual in the typical or common. It is, however, fallacious to think that India lacked all cultural unity in the past, and that this phenomenon is the outcome of recent events, the British rule among them. The ideal of cultural unity is not new to India, it is a concept which has been common to Indians of the past. The seers who gave birth to Indian culture were perfectly aware of the unity in India, the unity that derives from many common and uniform elements. This unity can be comprehended easily by understanding the unity that exists in various fields, as given below :

(i) *Geographical unity* : India, like every other country, has its own fixed boundaries that are natural. India is limited within boundaries that are natural. India is limited within boundaries that are evidence of geographical unity, a unity which baffles the scholars who themselves live in small European countries and find it difficult to comprehend how such a large country with so much variety of nature can be united.

The very name Bharatvarsha implies a historical significance that symbolizes unity. The name is not born of geographical necessity but is concerned with the ideal of chakravarty. This name, the chief characteristic of which is unity, has always occupied an important place in the minds of religious thinkers, political philosophers and poets since each has conceived of the country as a single expanse from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin, a country ruled by one king. It is for this unified entity that they have expressed admiration and love. Much of the literature of the past has praise for those kings and emperors who had tried to extend their respective empires from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin and from Brahmaputra in the East to Indus in the West. Some of them achieved success in their endeavours. Even in the medieval period each successive ruler

treated the country as a geographical unit and tried to extend his rule over the entire expanse of land. Even today when we address our country as "Mother India" it includes the realization of a geographical unity. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's patriotic song *Vande Mataram* exudes the feeling of this Indian unity.

(ii) *Religious unity* : Although the various religious groups in India present elements of external difference, it is not impossible to trace elements common to all. Each religious group exhibits one single feeling, each accepts the truth of immortality of soul, temporary nature of the world, rebirth, the law of *karma*, monism, salvation, *nirvana*, contemplation and all the other things that go to make up the religious paraphernalia. There are differences in the way these elements are treated but each religion preaches a fundamentally single religious faith, and shares a belief in the purity and value of life, faith in an invisible power, benevolence, piety, honesty and liberality, with every other religious system. The rituals are almost common to every form of religion in the country. If one were to look no further than the followers of Shiva and Vishnu one would find that although they pray to different Gods they are spread out all over the country, and they have erected temples which are to be found not only in the ice-bound mountains of the Himalayas and fertile plains of the Ganges but also in the deltas of Tungbhadra, Cauvery and Krishna. Ramayana and Mahabharata, the epics, are read as avidly in the Punjab and Kashmir as they are in the South. The legends of Rama and Krishna are sung and repeated with equal fervour among people who speak Hindi and among those who speak such languages as Tamil, Telugu and the rest. Equal respect is given everywhere to the Gita, the Vedas, Puranas and other scriptures in India.

This respect is given because these religious texts provide much satisfaction and solace to the people. Religious unity in India finds its expression through the places of worship scattered all over the country. Such religious places of the Hindus as Badrinarayan in the North, Dwarka in the West, Rameshwaram in the South and Puri in the East represent the religious unity of this vast country. It has been considered obligatory for every Indian to visit each of these holy places. But this pilgrimage comprehends the sentiment of patriotism and a feeling for the unity of the country also. When the Hindu prays during his bath, he recounts the names of major

rivers in the country such as Ganges, Jamuna, Godavari, Sarasvati, Narmada, Indus and the Cauvery. The prayer is intended not merely to remind the mortals of the vast size of the country but also of the religious and cultural unity that exists between Indians belonging to different parts.

(iii) *Cultural unity* : Indian culture possesses a fundamental unity, a unity the impress of which can be found on the literature and thought of different communities, despite the obvious difference in customs and traditions. The fundamental approach to literature, philosophy, traditions and customs is typically Indian. The basis of the social and cultural unity of the country is common to every group. One finds this common element lurking out from behind the apparent differences of social intercourse, religious rites, ceremonies and the rest of it. All groups and communities unanimously accept the inviolable nature of family. Sanctity of *sanskritis* and of the kitchen are commonly accepted. Many of the festivals are celebrated all over the country in one and the same manner. This is possible only because a cultural unity does exist.

Even in the most ancient and dark periods the Hindus have always been proponents of a fundamental unity in spite of surface dissimilarities. This basic trait inherent in Hindu culture has influenced every Hindu. There has never been any conflict between the proponents of different religions and each has continued to blow his own trumpet without interference from any other. All these saints have evinced the feeling of belonging to each other, a sense of identity of purpose and emotion. The interest that many Muslims have taken in Indian religion, philosophy, science and culture is the evidence of the fact that cultural unity has always marked the Indian life.

(iv) *Integral approach* : Integral approach has been characteristic to Indian culture. Indian social thought has emphasised one ultimate element underlying the multiplicity of the phenomenal world. Leaving aside exceptional philosophies as that of the Charvakas, from the philosophers of the ancient Vedas down to the contemporary Indian thinkers including Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi and others one finds an integral approach in philosophy. While some philosophers have negated multiplicity from unity, most of the Indian thinkers have considered multiplicity as increasing the richness of unity.

Not only in the philosophical field, but in economic, social, political and all other fields of life also, the Indian view point has been essentially integral.

Indian Social Philosophy

In social life the Indians have everywhere advocated a multi-sided integral progress as the Ideal. Since ancient times the Indian ideal of four *Purusarthas* viz. *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kama* and *Moksha* has presented an integral view of life. Some maintain that the ideals of renunciation and liberation in Indian thinking exhibit other-worldliness and escapism. Admitted that in some philosophical schools the ideal of liberation has been presented in a way which has no consistency with the terrestrial aims of life, but it is necessary to go deeper into the meanings of these values before arriving at any final conclusion. In spite of Buddha's ideal of Nirvana, his characteristic sympathy for human beings makes it difficult to admit that his philosophy should be called other-worldly. In Hindu social philosophy, the concept of Varna again shows the same integral approach. While Shankara has emphasised the value of liberation in human life, the sage Vatsyayana has laid emphasis on the ideal of Kama in his famous treatise *Kama Sutra*. In the history of man, wherever any culture emphasised too much some one particular aspect of human personality or life and left the other aspects unfulfilled, it led to cultural degeneration and the birth of opposite reactions. The conflict observed everywhere among man and society, nation and nation and even the conflict within the individual himself only exhibits the attempt of Nature everywhere to achieve harmony, synthesis, balance and integrality. This tendency is found not only in human society but even in the animal and plant life. In man it becomes only more conscious. This is proved by the fact that man cannot rest peacefully unless he solves his problems and removes his tensions. The integral philosophy of life shows the limitations of every need and value, gives it a proper place, leaves none, since the warp and woof of human life has been knitted by all these, and however one may wish he cannot remove any element of human personality and life though by suppressing it one may make one's life one-sided, frustrated and full of tensions. In his effort to achieve spiritual values, if a man rejects the physical or the mental values, it is an effort which is bound to

fail since the higher is only that which is reached after passing through the lower. The creative sources of human life are available not only on the spiritual level but on the biological and mental levels as well. Thus the integral standpoint gives importance to all these aspects.

Integral Approach in Contemporary Indian Social Philosophy

This integral approach is characteristic of the thinking of most of the contemporary Indian social philosophies. "The work of philosophy," maintains Sri Aurobindo, "is to arrange the data given by the various means of knowledge, excluding none, and put them into a synthetic relation to one truth, the one supreme and universal reality." ⁹ Similar quotations can be traced in the works of Radhakrishnan, Vivekananda, Ramakrishna, Tagore, Gandhi and Bhagwandas. This is because all these contemporary Indian social philosophers have acclaimed ancient Vedanta philosophy as the basis of their philosophical ideas. They are all neo-vedantins and the Vedanta philosophy is characteristically monistic, idealistic and integral. The integral spirit is characteristic of not only the philosophical thinking of these thinkers but also of their multisided life involving not only religious and philosophical activity but also intense activity in social and political fields. Most of them have been great social reformers and political leaders, religious saints and thinkers.

The integral approach in contemporary Indian social philosophy can be found in the intuitive method in social philosophy, integral perspective of human personality, harmony of nationalism and internationalism and the meeting of extremes in social thought. These are in tune with the ages old philosophical traditions of the land.

(i) *Intuitive method in social philosophy:* While pointing out the limitations of empirical, rational and critical methods in philosophy and accepting their limited value, the contemporary Indian social philosophers have utilised intuitive method in philosophy because spiritual intuition is the only method to delve deep into the recesses of Spirit. Sri Aurobindo, Radhakrishnan and Bhagwandas have distinguished spiritual intuition from mental, vital and physical or instinctive intuition. To quote Bhagwandas, "It is the immediate cognition or rather awareness of the self by the self

eternal self consciousness."¹⁰ According to Radhakrishnan, "The deepest things of life are known only through intuitive apprehension."¹¹ Sri Aurobindo, Radhakrishnan and Bhagwandas, to mention only three of the contemporary Indian social philosophers, have, however, admitted the role of reason in life and thought. As a higher instrument of knowledge, intuition does not negate but fulfills the lower instruments such as reason, instinct etc. Spiritual intuition also permits an integral view of life and its deeper realities. It is the integral method of integral philosophy.

(ii) *Integral perspective of human personality and education*: The contemporary Indian social philosophers have looked to human personality from an integral perspective to discover the inner kernel which is often missed by social sciences. They emphasize the spiritual aspect of man as an integrating principle which alone can boost his future evolution. It is because of an integral theory of human nature that Sri Aurobindo, Radhakrishnan, Tagore, Gandhi and Bhagwandas have advocated a multisided scheme of education including physical, moral and religious education true to the spirit of Indian culture, in spite of incorporating latest scientific truths. "The aim and principles of a true national education," said Sri Aurobindo, "is not certainly to ignore modern truth and knowledge but to take our foundations on our own belief, our own mind and our own spirit."

(iii) *Harmony of nationalism and internationalism*: Sri Aurobindo, Radhakrishnan, Bhagwandas, Gandhi and Vivekananda have been the leaders of the rise of nationalism in India. They have relentlessly criticised and opposed foreign rule in India. They have everywhere pleaded for Swadeshi and Swadharma. Sri Aurobindo gave a crushing reply to Western attacks on Indian philosophy. Gandhi launched political movements of Swadeshi. Bhagwandas, comparing ancient Indian socialism with its modern western counterpart, pointed out the virtues of Indian system. And yet all these strongly supported internationalism and the ideal of world brotherhood. It was so because of their integral perspective of social and political philosophy in which the higher does not contradict the lower but fulfills it. To quote Radhakrishnan, "The wider patriotism does not supersede but embraces the narrower patriotism."¹³ Tagore, the poet of Indian nationalism, established a truly international university at Vishwa Bharati. Sri Aurobindo established an international university at Pondicherry.

(iv) *Meeting of extremes* : Thus contemporary Indian social philosophy can be characterised by a meeting of extremes. This is because most of its spokesmen, including Sri Aurobindo, Radhakrishnan, Bhagwandas, Vivekananda, Gandhi and Tagore had a wide and deep knowledge of western science, art, literature and culture and a first hand contact with the West. It is hence that they could compare Eastern thought with Western and reach at an integral viewpoint. Thus one finds a meeting of idealism and realism, ancient Indian ideals and modern western principles, nationalism and internationalism, individualism and socialism in their writings. They drew their inspiration from ancient scriptures, Upanishads and Gita. They revived the ancient Vedanta philosophy in modern garb. They synthesised spiritual truths with scientific discoveries. They pleaded for a meeting of Eastern and Western culture and religion. They advocated a world government and a world state, so that humanity may march in its onward progress as one solid community. They reconciled modern activities with ancient ideals of renunciation. Thus in metaphysics, epistemology, psychology, ethics, religion, education, social and political sciences. Sri Aurobindo, Tagore, Vivekananda, Gandhi, Bhagwandas and Radhakrishnan have maintained integral approach, the only proper perspective for the future speculative activity of man.

Idealism in Ancient Indian Thought

The term Idealism can be understood mainly in two meanings, metaphysical and epistemological. Metaphysically, Idealism is the theory which maintains that the ultimate reality is spiritual in nature. Thus Idealism has been put in contrast to materialism. Epistemologically, it means the theory that the known is not independent of the knower. In this sense it is understood in contrast to the epistemological theory of realism. Both these types of thought are not invariably connected to each other though they may be often interrelated. There is no incompatibility in being a metaphysical idealist and yet at the same time believing that the objects are independent of the mind. As a matter of fact, some of the philosophers have held this view. This idealism was the dominant trend of ancient Indian thought. Ancient Indian thought originated in the Vedas and reached its fullest and multisided expression in the Upanishads after which each of the essential truth manifested in a different and comprehensive system of

Indian philosophy. Thus a survey of idealism as the dominant trend of ancient Indian thought requires a survey of the metaphysics and epistemology of the Upanishads. It goes without saying that this Upanishadic idealism, as the basis of contemporary Indian philosophy, maintains the continuity in Indian thought from ancient to contemporary times.

Whenever great revolutions took place in the history of Indian thought, the philosophers sought for guidance in the Upanishads. The period of the Upanishads after that of the Vedas was one of the most revolutionary periods in the history of Indian philosophy. After Upanishads came *Gita* which made an effort to present a practical treatise embodying the essence of the Upanishads. Even now when the world needs a synthesis of philosophy, religion and science, perhaps Upanishads alone can guide the thinking beings. The thinkers of East and West have profited from the study of the Upanishads since ancient times. Geden has pointed out that all the movements of religious reformation in India have taken inspiration from the Upanishads. The social reformers like Romesh Chandra Dutt and Raja Ram Mohan Roy were inspired by the Upanishads. Mead calls the Upanishads "world scriptures". Besides this many more philosophers and thinkers, including Schopenhauer, Gandhi, Aurobindo, Shankara, Ramanuja etc., got light from the Upanishads, from time to time.

Social Implications of Indian Spiritualism

The above discussion of the main features of Indian spiritualism makes it clear that it was mostly an individualistic pursuit of spiritualism. In it the man was concerned for his own liberation and not for the welfare of society. Even where social service has been prescribed as a means for spiritual evolution, it never became an end. Therefore, if liberation were possible without social involvement, the aspirant became cut-off from society. It is true that the Upanishads equally emphasize spirit in the individual and spirit in society but the means to realise the spirit in society were individual and not social. For example, the method of realisation considered social values as non-values and leading to bondage. Thus Upanishads prescribed introversion which means being isolated from society.

From the philosophical and psychological view point Indian spiritualism prescribed ways and means which were in no way conducive to social welfare. Thus inadvertently social philosophy has been undermined in ancient Indian philosophy. Though Indian philosophy has always prescribed social service as a potent means of self-realisation and God realisation, yet since worldly knowledge has been classified as bondage and life on earth has been considered as a stepping stone for some so called eternal life, in practice spiritualism always resulted in indifference towards social philosophy. This was so, since strictly speaking, from the traditional spiritual view point, the problems of social philosophy were considered problems of bondage and therefore did not deserve much attention.

Reasons for Undermining Social Philosophy

The social implications of Indian spiritualism will be further clear by the analysis of the reasons undermining social philosophy in ancient Indian philosophy. The most important reasons could be described as follows :

(A) Philosophical Reasons

The roots of negligence of social philosophy can be found in Indian metaphysics. Indian metaphysics interprets the world as an imposition upon the Spirit. Spirit alone is real and spirit is non-dual. Therefore, the world seen different from Spirit is unreal. Some have called the world even an illusion. Some others considered it as a manifestation or expression of the Divine and yet for them also the expression or the manifestation is not as important as the unexpressed and unmanifested spirit. Thus whether the world is considered as real or unreal, in both the cases it was never acknowledged as ultimately real. It was rather declared as ultimately false. And if some philosophers have not identified the world with an illusion, and accepted some sort of reality in it, that could not save the doom of social philosophy. Social philosophy is possible only if the world is considered to be ultimately real and society as an end and not a means to ultimate welfare And since Indian philosophy accepts Brahman as the ultimate reality, and the world as non-Brahman, and since it aimed at the ultimate reality alone, the result was that no thinker cared to think on social problems seriously. In brief, the following three philosophical rea-

sons were responsible for undermining the status of social philosophy in India.

1. *Extra-terrestrial goal of life* : From a detailed discussion of the concept of liberation as the goal of life in Indian philosophy, it becomes clear that it was an extra terrestrial aim. Even where liberation while living has been accepted, such a living liberated being was required to pass his life in introversion and not as socially active person. Thus whatever may be said in defence of the objection that Indian philosophy lays down an extra-terrestrial goal of life, the fact remains that liberation, whatever may be its different meaning in different philosophical systems, has primarily been a trans-mundane ideal.

2. *Worldly knowledge as ignorance* : Not only Indian spiritual metaphysics has been against the growth of social philosophy, Indian epistemology has also been inimical to it. Knowledge, according to Indian epistemology, is the same as the ultimate reality and therefore, whatever is not ultimate is not knowledge but ignorance. Again, the spiritual man always aims at knowledge and avoids ignorance considering it as a positive hinderance in the achievement of knowledge. This attitude resulted in the interpretation of all social virtues as hinderances in spiritual pursuits. For example, most of the Indian seers and saints have dubbed social mixing as harmful in spiritual life.

3. *Social welfare as means and never as end*: Not only in metaphysics and epistemology but in axiology too Indian spiritualism leads to negation of social philosophy. As has been already pointed out, social life being considered as bondage, and social problems neglected as ignorance resulted in universal indifference to social philosophy. Even where service to man was accepted as a means of service to God, social welfare was never an end in itself but always a means which could be discarded when its utility is no more. Thus philosophically Indian spiritualism presented a metaphysics, epistemology and axiology which was not conducive but was even positively inimical to social philosophy in India.

(B) *Psychological Reasons*

Philosophical reasons for undermining the status of social philosophy led to its psychological reasons. These were partly concerned

with the spiritual method of self realisation and partly with the attitude towards social welfare and worldly knowledge. The most important psychological reasons can be explained as follows:

1. *Self-realisation via negation*: Psychology today explains self realisation as a social process. In West most of the spiritual thinking has included social welfare as a spiritual pursuit. Indian spiritualism, on the other hand, advocates self-realisation through a negation of the world. That is why the first step in spiritual practice, as prescribed by the Upanishads is introversion which means directing our attention away from the world outside and concentrating it absolutely in the world within us. This negation of the world as the achievement of the prime goal of life, naturally leads to undermining of social philosophy.

2. *Individualistic Sadhana*: Sri Aurobindo, the champion of Indian spiritualism in our times has accepted that the ideal of liberation as preached in India was generally individualistic. He himself claims to advance an ideal of universal liberation. Though this universalisation of an essentially individualistic aim of life is hardly an improvement upon it, spiritual liberation has always been an individual goal. At least social welfare or service to society was never a necessary part of the goal of liberation. Therefore there is no wonder that most of the spiritual seekers in India were unconcerned with the state of society around them. Even now the advocates of the spiritual goal of life in India openly boast of being unconcerned with the society and its problems. Not only this but they underrate if not derogate the efforts of those who are busy in the uplift of society. They even term them as engrossed in ignorance and bondage.

3. *Negligence of social values and facts*: Since the spiritual world view in India was built-up purely on the individual and the universal, it neglected the social facts and values. This world view found no useful place for social values and facts. The ultimate reality was said to have no place for them and since the spiritual seeker was directly concerned with the ultimate reality, and with it alone, he was generally unconcerned with social facts and values. This naturally resulted in a psychological indifference towards social philosophy.

4. *Emphasis on knowledge and devotion than on action*: In the practical aspect of Indian spiritualism knowledge was given

the highest place since they thought that to know is to be. Knowledge was same as reality and since they aimed at reality itself their goal was knowledge. For those who were of a more emotional bent of mind devotion was considered to be an effective method of self-realisation and God realisation. Both in knowledge and devotion the man is self-centred and cut-off from society. The evolution of social self depends on social action. Unless one indulges in social action of some sort, one cannot develop the social aspect of self. This resulted in negligence of social problems and therefore indifference to social philosophy in Indian thought. Even those who later on gave a concession to social action and included it as one of the means of spiritual realisation, never considered it to be absolutely necessary for self realisation of liberation.

(c) *Sociological Reasons*

Though Indian life has been very much dominated by the spiritualism peculiar to it and has always shown the psychological attitude resulting from spiritual philosophy, the sociological reasons were not in any way unimportant for undermining social philosophy in ancient Indian thought. India has always been an agrarian society very much dependent on natural environment. It has been a country of villages where the concept of society was mostly limited to social relationships within the village and with the villages around. Till the advent of British in India there was hardly a consciousness of an all India Nation. Even in the medieval times Indians were divided into several nations. Thus the social horizon has generally been very limited. The social problems were mostly solved through religious solutions prescribed through the religious books. Social thought was based upon religious ground. Thus whatever social thought developed was mixed with religious and metaphysical thinking with the result that social philosophy was neglected in India.

Besides the above reasons for undermining social philosophy in Indian thought, several other reasons may be pointed out such as negligence of social sciences, theocratic state-craft and polity etc. This negligence of social philosophy is not a characteristic of ancient Indian philosophy alone, it is a constant feature of Indian philosophy from ancient to contemporary times. Even today we

have not much literature on social philosophy available in India. Not many of our philosophers have made any significant contribution to this most important field of knowledge. The reasons are the same as have been elaborated in our criticism of Indian spiritualism and its social implications. Indian social philosophy can be traced to the period of modern renaissance in India. After renaissance some important thinkers developed some sort of social philosophy on the basis of Vedantic thinking. The most important among these were Sri Aurobindo, Vivekananda, Tagore and Gandhi. After making a detailed sociological analysis of Indian society and social institutions we will refer to areas of agreement among these thinkers about various issues in social thought so that broad lines for future Indian social reconstruction and evolution may be laid down.

REFERENCES

1. Radhakrishnan, S., *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 205
2. Aurobindo, S., *The Renaissance in India*, p. 72
3. Bhagwandas, *The Science of Self*, p. 44
4. Rabindranath Tagore, *The Religion of Man* (1931) p. 63
5. F. Max Muller, *Ramkrishna : His Life and Sayings*, Advaita
6. Gandhi, M. K., in C. S. Shukla's, *Conversation of Gandhiji Ashram*.
7. *Ibid*, p. 30
8. Sri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine*, Vol II, p. 726
9. Sri Aurobindo, *The Renaissance in India*, p. 72
10. Bhagwandas, *The Science of the Self*, p. 137, footnote.
11. Radhakrishnan, S., *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 142
12. Sri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine*, Vol. II p. 726
13. Radhakrishnan, S., *Report of the University Education Commission*, Vol. I, p. 53

CHAPTER 2

HINDU SOCIAL SYSTEM AND INSTITUTIONS : THE PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF HINDU SOCIAL ORGANIZATION — VARNASHRAM SYSTEM

The Varna System

In *Nirukta*, Shri Yaskacharya evolved the word '*varna*', from the root '*Vri*' giving the meaning of choice or *varna*. In this way, *varna* is that which a person chooses according to his nature and his work. *Varna* has been used for colour as well. Originally, the word '*varna*' was applied to white complexioned Aryans and black complexioned slaves or servants. At a later stage the word came to be used for the four social classes, i.e., Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra.

The aim of the four *varna* system propounded in India was division of labour, similar to the division of labour propounded by Plato and Wells. The theory of division of labour is one of the fundamental theories of social organisation. It maintains that for an orderly progress of work in society it is necessary that it be divided into classes, according to natural tendencies. Dr. Bhagwandas has rightly divided the traditional Indian social system in the following classes :

(1) Teacher class, (2) governing class, (3) business class, (4) physical labourer class. These are respectively the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas, the Vaishyas and the Shudras. Thus the responsibility of the Brahmins was to see to the proper execution of academic work like study and teaching, and other religious activities. The government of the state, defence and administration were left to the Kshatriya while the Vaishyas carried on the agriculture, dairy farming and business. The Shudras served the other *varnas*. As has been said earlier, this class division is not peculiar to India, it has been the common feature of the organised societies of the world.

While speaking on the subject this is what Sri Krishna said of the *varna* system in the *Gita*: चार्तुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टिः गुणकर्म विभागशः meaning that I am the one who has created the four *varnas* according to nature and function. In this way, in the *varna* system, the division of labour has been effected on the basis of inherent qualities and mental tendencies. Indians have accepted four tendencies common in man : *satvika*, *satvika-rajaska*, *rajasika-tamasika*, and *tamasika*. The division of the *varna* system has been made on the basis of these tendencies. The Brahmins were of the *satvika* nature, Kshatriyas of the *satvika-rajasika*, Vaishyas of the *rajasika-tamasika* and Shudras of the *tamasika*. Thus, originally, in the *varna* system greater preference was given to nature and tendency than to birth. It is said in the Atharva Veda न दासो नार्यो व्रतम् निमाय meaning that I do not take a man to be a slave or Arya from his birth, I evaluate him from his qualities. In the Hindu Dharmashastras, it is said जन्मना जायते शूद्रः संस्कराद् द्विज उच्यते meaning that everyone is a Shudra at birth, becoming a *Dwija* only after *sanskaras* like *upanayan* etc. Being fundamentally based upon quality and tendency does not mean that the theory of *varna* system utterly disregarded the influence of heredity. Actually, this theory makes heredity a part of environment. Generally, the children are expected to adopt the same *varna* as is of their parents. The question of qualities and tendencies arises only when some departure from hereditary class in the present tendencies is exhibited.

Developed Social Order

The *varna* system is a developed social system. Social stratification is found in all societies but it is difficult to find one as systematic as the Indian *varna* system. The object of this system is to put the different powers of man to proper and productive uses in order to maintain the solid, organized and balanced state of society. The Indian scholars, like Plato of Greece, gave the highest position in society to Brahmins, experts in the field of thought and spirit. The second place was given to the protectors, the Kshatriyas and the third to the producers, the Vaishyas with the servants of the society in the fourth place. People unable to perform any expert activity were included in the Shudra class. In the *varna* system the higher classes got special rights and prerogatives but special responsibility corresponding to their authority was also attached to it. This is clear from the provisions

for punishments made by the penal authorities. According to Manu the retribution made for theft should be of the value of eight times in the case of Shudra, 16 times if the person is a Vaishya, 32 times if a Kshatriya and 64 or 100 times if a Brahmin.

Another major advantage of the *varna* system was the decentralisation of power. Concentration of all the powers of society in the hands of one class may lead to exploitation and despotism. In the *varna* system the power of knowledge, power of arms, power of wealth and power of labour, were evenly distributed among the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas, the Vaishyas and the Shudras respectively. In this way, society was made safe from the evil results of centralization. The rewards of their work differed. The Brahmins were rewarded in the form of respect, the Kshatriyas in the form of authority, the Vaishyas in wealth and the Shudras in rest, etc. Thus, by keeping respect, authority and wealth distinct the society was saved from the present day defects of centralisation or localisation of power.

In this way the *varna* system shows a fine synthesis of the fundamentals of social organization, division of labour, decentralization and the correct position of the different values. This convention was not severe and being based on inherent qualities and tendencies, it was, at the same time, quite psychological too. But, at a later stage, it became a rigid system and lost its good qualities.

Distinctions Between Varna and Caste

The present caste system in India differs from ancient *varna* system in the following distinctions :

(1) *Literal distinction* : Caste and *varna* are completely different from each other. The difference in their literal meaning shows this. '*Jati*' is evolved from a Sanskrit root '*Jah*' meaning 'to be born'. Thus caste means birth. On the other hand, *varna* means to select or choose. In this way, caste is determined at birth whereas *varna* is acquired by a person according to his nature.

(2) *Caste is based upon birth, varna is based upon action* : Thus, caste is based upon birth while *varna* is based upon action. In the caste system an uneducated Brahmin is respected while an educated Shudra is looked down upon. In the *varna* system, Brahmin is respected only if he has acquired knowledge and imparts it to others. The idea of *varna* mainly lays emphasis upon

the ethical and intellectual capabilities of man. In the caste system special importance is given to birth-rights and respect enjoyed on their account.

(3) *Varna system is flexible and caste a rigid one* : The *varna* system was a flexible and changing system. There were many examples of change in *varna*, and inter-*varna* marriages, during and even after the Vedic period. The Kshatriya Vishvamitra became a Brahmin on the basis of his penance. Parashurama was Brahmin by birth and Kshatriya by action. The same thing happened to Indra. In the Mahabharata there is a mention of Devapi, Sindhudip and Vitahavya becoming Brahmins, and there are similar instances in the Bhagwata Purana. In the Padma Purana we have a mention of low born Vyasa and Vaishya Vashishtha becoming Brahmins. There are numerous examples of inter-*varna* marriages in the Mahabharata. Kshatriya King Yayati married the Brahmin Devyani while Dushyanta married Shakuntala. Although Shantanu was a Kshatriya, he married low born Satyawati. Caste system forbids marriage among different castes, each caste considering marriages right if these are in the same caste itself.

(4) *Difference in numbers* : There is a vast difference in the number of *varnas* and castes. *Varnas* are four. In the tenth *mandala* of the Rig Veda we find ब्राह्मणोऽस्य मुखमासीद बाहू राजन्यः कृतः । उरः तदस्य यद्वैश्यः पदभ्याम् शूद्रोऽब्रजायतः ॥ meaning that the Brahmin does the work of the mouth in giving knowledge, the Kshatriya is comparable to the arms because he defends society, the Vaishya works like the legs in the production and distribution of wealth while the Shudra serves the society like the feet. Thus, there were four *varnas*. On the other hand, Rose has put the number of castes at 400, on the authority of census reports.

Thus, although the caste system originated from the *varna* system it is different from it. It has lost the advantage of the *varna* system and became detrimental to the society. Shri Jawaharlal Nehru has said correctly that though there was cultural and social development due to the caste system, it made victory easy for the foreigners.

The Ashram System

Writing in his *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, the German scholar, Paul Deussen, gives two meanings to the word *ashram* : (1) That place where people labour or make effort, (2) To labour or make effort. The word *ashram* comes from the Sanskrit root

giving the meaning of 'making an effort'. In this way *ashram* literally means a step in the journey of life. According to Hindu ethics, the final aim of life is liberation. And every *ashram* is a step in the long journey to that aim. In the Shanti Parva of Mahabharata, Saint Vedavyasa has described *ashramas* as a four rung ladder which takes one in the direction of Brahma. Vedavyasa says — In this way, in each *ashram* the person prepares himself for every succeeding *ashram* state. The *ashram* system is a means of systematic development for the better life. The four *ashrams* are as follows :

(a) *Brahmacharya Ashram* : The Indian religious system recognizes four *ashrams*. Taking man's average age to be 100 years, the span of each *ashram* is believed to be 25 years. The first of the four is the *Brahmacharya ashram*. *Brahmacharya* means the leading of life according to Brahma. In this *ashram* the student or *Brahmachari* spent 25 years with his teacher studying the Vedas and leading a life of self-control. The education and control of the *Brahmacharya* prepared a person for future life.

(b) *Grahashta Ashram* : After spending 25 years as a *Brahmachari* and finishing his education, a man married and entered the *Grahashta ashram*. According to the *Gautama Dharma Sutra*, the *Grahashta ashram* is the foundation of all the *ashrams*. Manu maintained that just as all beings subsist on air, so do all beings take life from the *Grahashta ashram*. This *ashram* feeds all the other *ashrams*. According to Manu, the three *ashrams* attain fulfilment through the *Grahashta ashram* and live on its help, just as all the big and small rivers become fulfilled upon reaching the ocean. The main duties of the *Grahashta ashram* are the following — reproduction, production of wealth, feeding the family and giving education, help or rendering service to other members of society etc. In this *ashram* the person learns the lesson of selflessness, sacrifice, pity and sympathy, besides fulfilling his own needs and satisfying his desires.

(c) *Vanaprastha Ashram* : The third is the *Vanaprastha ashram*. Manu says गृहस्यस्तु यदा पश्येद्वल्लोपलितमात्मनः । अपत्यस्यैव चापत्यं तदारण्यम समाश्रयेत् ॥ meaning that when a person finds his hair grey and his son has a son he should hand over every piece of work to his son and leave for the jungle in order to pray to God and practise Yoga. In the *Vanaprastha ashram*, the person busied

himself in the search for liberation having given up all his worries of the world.

(d) *Sanyasa Ashram* : After 25 years of conditioning in the *Vanaprastha ashram* one entered the last, the *Sanyasa ashram*. Entering this *ashram* one had to take a vow that : "I have completely, from this day bidden farewell to all desires and anxieties regarding son, wealth and the world. All living beings may be made fearless by me." In this way, having completely given up all such selfish desires, a *sanyasi* roamed about in the world with a desire to teach the people in order to emancipate mankind. This is the supreme duty of a *sanyasi*.

The *ashram* system is indicative of an integral approach to human life. By it a complete development of human power, physical, mental and spiritual, takes place and their proper satisfaction leads to an integral development of man. It maintains the balance of social and individual development. It is the most unique system in human social history and has eternal value.

Purusharthas and Trivarga

The idea of *Purusharthas* is a fundamental principle of Indian social ethics. According to it, the aim of every person in the world is to attain the four *purusharthas*—*Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kama* and *Moksha*. *Kama* or sex is a natural tendency in every person. *Artha* or wealth is the means of fulfilment of sex and other needs and the life system of society. *Dharma* implies the laws or principles on which society is based. According to the Vaisesika philosophy, यतोम्यदय निः श्रेयस सिद्धिः स धर्मः॥ meaning that *Dharma* is that which leads to improvement in this world and to liberation in the next. *Dharma*, *Artha* and *Kama* relate to objects of this world. These are, in brief, called the *Trivarga*. Duty, wealth and sex indicate respectively ethical ideals, physical means and physical, mental and vital desires of man. It is man's duty to fulfil all the three. Besides the *trivarga*, liberation is just as important in human life. At one time the Hindus interpreted *trivarga* as a means to liberation though generally all the four *purusharthas* have been stressed. Vatsyayana has written, "A man in hundred years of age should gain knowledge in childhood, sex satisfaction in youth and attend to duty and liberation in old age." Manu stated clearly, "Some people attribute more importance to duty,

some to wealth and some to sex. Actually, all the three are equally important and creditable." Manu had gone to the extent of saying that one should try for liberation only after he has passed through the three ashrams to fulfil duty, attain wealth and enjoy sex, and has rid himself of the three debts to God, father and teachers because a person not doing so will find himself in trouble. In this way, it is clear that with regard to the aim of life, Indian social ethics emphasizes an integral approach.

In Man's history there are many instances of the balance between the society and the individual being lost due to laying of excessive emphasis upon one aspect of life. Buddhists, Christians, among them St. Paul and Tertullian and priests of the middle ages in Europe, laid excessive emphasis on abstinence with the result that there was a strong reaction in the direction of immorality. Vama Margi Buddhists took women and wine to be an important part of the means. Immorality was conspicuous by its absence in groups like Choli Marga. In Europe in the middle ages, the monasteries had become centres of corruption. This reaction was manifested in other directions in the form of cruelty and violence. Indian seers were acquainted with these psychological possibilities. They, thus emphasized all the four *purusharthas* equally. This kept the organisation of society and the individual integrated and balanced.

The Concept of Rinas

The Indian social organizers paid attention to the idea of *Rinas* or debts along with the four *ashrams* and *purusharthas*. Four types of debts have been enumerated in the *Shatapatha Brahmana* : (1) to Gods, (2) to seers, (3) to ancestors, and (4) to fellow beings. Ordinarily, Indian thinkers have accepted three types of debts : (1) Paternal debt, (2) Debt towards teachers, and (3) Debt towards Gods. Debt to parents is the highest because they look after a person in his infancy, suffering much pain themselves in the process. According to the Indian commentators, the way of repaying parental debt is to have children oneself and look after them in the same way. Besides the parents, the seers and teachers impart knowledge to a person and make him capable of doing all work efficiently in the world. As for the repayment of this debt the means are to study the Vedas and to obey the laws of the *Brahmacharya ashram*. The debt to gods is paid off by performing different

yajnas. A person owns these debts the moment he is born and he cannot hope for liberation unless he clears the debt. The idea of debts conveys the lesson of unselfish fulfilment of duty and responsibility to man.

The Doctrine of Karma

The doctrine of *karma* is the ethical background of Indian social organization. There are three major elements in the doctrine of *Karma* — (1) Every human activity entails results which may take any of the following forms — physical, mental or ethical. It affects the person's nature, character and tendencies. Man reaps the harvest of past life in the form of lust and *sanskaras*. (2) *Karma* necessitates another life because man cannot reap the reward of his actions in one life. (3) The diversities, i.e. poor or rich, happy or sorrowful, intelligent or foolish etc., are all results of the actions of previous births. (4) The doctrine of *Karma* makes indispensable a belief in the immortality of the self. To reap the reward of actions of this life the *jiva* should be reborn just as the *karmas* of this life prove the previous existence of *jiva*.

The doctrine of *karma* prevents people from bad actions; it does not encourage fatalism. A. B. Keith holds that it encourages fatalism and hinders moral progress, and this criticism is valid for the present distorted form of the doctrine. But in its pure philosophical form it preaches *purushartha* instead of fatalism and morality in place of immorality. According to this doctrine, although man's present state is due to past actions, his future depends upon good actions. Actually, the doctrine is based on real facts and its message to the people is to improve their lives by making use of natural laws.

The Sanskaras

Sanskara means to purify. According to Manu, *sanskaras* purify the body. Starting with *Garbhadhana* they end with *Antyeshti*. Every *sanskara* starts with a *yajna*. Opinions differ in regard to their number. Whereas *Gautama Dharma Sutra* details some 48 *sanskaras* most *sutras* put their number at 40. Some of the more important *sanskaras* are — *Garbhadhana*, *Punsavana*, *Jatakarma*, *Namakarana*, *Upanayana*, *Samavartana*, *Vivaha* and *Antyeshti*.

(1) *Garbhadhana*: *Garbhadhana* is the first *sanskara* of human life. After marriage, the couple make sacrifices to the fire and

promising to lead a life of love they pray to Vishnu, Sinivali, Ashwinau, Agni, Indra and other Gods, to grant to them the most powerful and innocent children to enable them to follow *dharma*. The first *sanskara* performed with this pure feeling is *garbhadhana*, it being done for the being to come into the womb of woman.

(2) *Punsavana*: The *punsavana sanskara* is performed in the third month of the wife's pregnancy. In this the prayer is directed to gods who protected pregnancy. At the time the woman is told — आ बीरो जायतां पुत्रस्ते दशमास्यः ॥ The aim is the desire for a powerful son and the safety and health of the embryo.

(3) *Jatakarma*: The *jatakarma sanskara* is performed when the child is born. In this the father touching the child whispers some *mantras* into his ears expressing the desire that he be intelligent and live to a ripe old age. Following it, 'OM' is inscribed on the child's tongue with a pen of gold. The aim is to create an atmosphere for the complete development of the child's powers right from birth and to remind the parents of their responsibility in his character formation.

(4) *Namakarana*: Ten or twelve days after the child's birth the *namakarana sanskara* is performed. Following it are performed the *niskramana* in the fourth month, and *annaprashana* in the sixth, *churakarma* in the third year, and the *karnavedha sanskara* in the fifth year. On the subject of *namakarana*, Manu opines that the names given should be according to the *varna* and ideals.

(5) *Upanayana*: The *upanayana sanskara* takes place in the eighth year. Of the two parts of the word, the former 'UP' means near while the child was taken to the teacher. In India in the past, the child used to live with the teacher to study after *upanayana*. The aim of this *sanskara* is to establish as close a relation, between the teacher and the taught, as possible. He is given the sacred thread to wear and told the laws of *Brahmacharya*.

(6) *Samavartana*: After the person has finished his studies, observing all the laws of *Brahmacharya*, he comes home and it is the occasion for the *samavartana sanskara*. At this stage he is shaved for the first time and given cosmetics to use. He is now considered as one possessing the right to spend a domestic life.

(7) *Vivaha*: *Vivaha* or marriage is an indication of the person's having entered domestic life. According to Valavalkar the person is thereby socialised because herein reproduction is pro-

mised for the furtherance of the race. In the marriage *sanskara* many rituals like *madhuparka*, *shilārohana* etc., are observed, to impress the importance of holy wedlock.

After *grahastha ashram* at fifty, the person entered the *vana-prastha ashram* and the *sanyasa ashram* at seventy-five.

(8) *Antyesthi*: The *antyesthi sanskara* is performed at the person's death. In this *sanskara* the tradition is to burn the body on a wooden pyre. Many mantras are chanted as ghee is sprinkled on the fire. Normally, it is the eldest son who performs the last rites.

The *sanskaras* have a great importance from the viewpoint of social ethics. According to Valavalkar the whole system of *sanskaras* points out that some new responsibilities are being placed on man for social and individual good and it is his major duty to respect them. Marriage and other *sanskaras* are not only for individual good, they also represent one's responsibility to society. Thus the balance and harmony of the individual and society is maintained and both rise to progress.

In this way, the Hindu ethics maintains a proper balance between the individual and the social good, good of this life and the next, means and end, rights and duties. In an integral approach to life all these combine naturally and exist as mutual complements.

Hindu Caste System

What is Caste?

The word 'caste' is used in everyday life and we use it to distinguish one person from another. We say that such and such a person belongs to a particular caste. In saying it we generally mean to convey that he is born of parents or is a member of the family said to belong to a particular caste. In this way caste is a hereditary group. And in biology the word is used only for descent or heredity. But this definition is inadequate for the academic purposes since sociology requires a more comprehensive and clarified definition.

Modern thinkers consider it best to enumerate the features of caste in defining it. This is what Hutton, Ghurye and N. K. Datta have done. Of the predominating characteristics of caste, N. K. Datta has mentioned the following:

- (a) Members of a caste cannot wed outside their own caste.

- (b) There are similar but less strict laws governing the partaking of food with members of other groups.
- (c) For many castes the occupations are fixed.
- (d) There are some accepted stratifications among the castes in which the Brahmins have been accorded the best place at the top.
- (e) Birth determines the caste of the individual for his entire life, so long as he is not extradited from it for violating its laws. There is no other possible way of shifting from one caste to another.
- (f) All occupations are based on respect for the Brahmins.

This description of the caste system by Datta is a more comprehensive exposition but this too does not take into account the numerous variations presently taking place in the caste system. Actually, it is difficult to formulate a definite and permanent definition of caste. The most that can be done is to describe the features of the caste system in a particular context, since the caste system is undergoing much modification and transformation. It would not be surprising if caste were eventually reduced to a word signifying merely a group, since inter-caste marriages are increasing and the restrictions on mutual behaviour, exchange of goodwill and conduct are breaking. Some people change their castes on the strength of their wealth, the occupations for the various castes are no longer fixed, a member of any caste takes to any profession that he desires, the Brahmins have been deprived of much of their past glory and respect, very few caste panchayats are to be seen and even they have no control whatsoever over the members. Many people have even started excluding their caste name from the name they use. In this way caste is continually taking on the shape of class and casteism is growing in the form of classism.

Main Characteristics of Caste System

The following are the main characteristics of caste system:

- (1) *Caste is determined by birth*: The membership of caste is determined by birth. A person remains the member of the caste into which he is born and his membership does not undergo any change even if changes in his status, occupation, education, wealth etc., take place.

✓ (2) *Caste has definite rules about food habits:* Each individual caste has its own laws which govern the food habits of its members. Generally there are no restrictions against fruit, milk, butter, dry fruit etc., but cooked food (bread etc.) can be accepted only from a member of one's own or of a higher caste.

✓ (3) *Professions are fixed by caste:* In the Hindu religious texts the occupations of all *varnas* were determined. According to Manu the functions of the Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and the Shudras were definite. The function of the Brahmin is to study, to teach, to guide and perform religious rituals, give and receive alms; that of Kshatriya is to study, perform religious rituals, give alms, punish the evil and go to war; that of Vaishya is to study, perform religious ritual, give alms, carry on agriculture, trade and animal husbandry; that of the Shudra is to do menial work for all the other *varnas*. Having developed from *varna* system the occupations in caste system are definite. In Hindu society even today in most cases the son of a blacksmith pursues the occupation of his father, the son of a carpenter becomes a carpenter while the son of a shoemaker becomes a shoemaker.

✓ (4) *Caste is endogamous:* The members of each of the many castes marry only within their own caste. Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra all marry within their respective castes. Westermarck considers this to be a chief characteristic of the caste. Hindu community does not sanctify inter-caste marriages even now.

✓ (5) *Caste has rules about touchability:* The various castes in the Hindu social organization are divided into a hierarchy in which the Brahmins have the highest and the untouchables the lowest position. To the sense of superiority is also conjoined the law of untouchability. The feeling of superiority is much exaggerated and manifest in the South. The very touch and sometimes even the shadows of the members of the lower caste are enough to defile an individual of a high caste. In Kerala a Namboodari Brahmin is defiled by the touch of a Nayar, but in the case of a member of Thiya caste a distance of thirty-six feet must be kept to avoid being defiled and in the case of member of the Pulayan caste the distance must be ninety six feet. The stringent observation of the system of untouchability has resulted in some low castes of

the Hindu society being called untouchables who were consequently forbidden to make use of places of worship, cremation grounds, schools, public roads and hotels, etc., and were disallowed from living in the cities.

Conditions Favouring the Caste System

Since hundreds of years caste system is prevalent in India. And even now it is firmly rooted in Indian social structure. The following conditions have favoured the continued existence of caste system in India:

(1) *Geographical isolation*: Geographical isolation has a large part to play in rendering a society static and powerless. The absence of adequate means of transport leads to the geographical isolation, from others, of people who inhabit distantly situated areas and this fosters old customs, mores, traditions and superstitions, all of which encourage the caste system.

(2) *Static society*: Hindu society has never been very dynamic. There has never been any stupendous variation in its political circumstances and economic conditions. Its social mores, customs and traditions have failed to change over the ages as times have marched along. But this does not mean that Hindu society has not changed at all. To say that it is not dynamic is only to indicate the extremely slow rate at which variations and modifications are instituted in it. In this way the comparatively static nature of society is a condition favourable to the continued existence of the caste system.

Extremely
slow
rate

(3) *Foreign aggression*: A further contribution to the desirability and utility of the caste system was made by foreign aggression. Many scholars hold that the caste system started in India when the Aryans invaded the country. The Aryan victors were fair skinned and the natives of India were black or dark skinned. Thus, two castes were formed in India. The victorious race considered itself superior to the victimised one and considered it below its dignity to associate itself with them and so rules concerning marriage, etc., were formulated. These were the fundamental constituents of the caste system.

Invasion
of
Arya

(4) *Rural social structure*: The rural social structure is usually unchanging and static. Ancient traditions are better respected in it. As the rural structure weakens and urbanization increases, the caste also becomes progressively weaker.

unchanging
&
static

Caste system
as
divine
Institution

(5) *Influence of religion*: The influence of religion is the most important factor contributing to the caste system which is looked upon as a divine institution. People who violate it are considered sinners and it is believed that God will punish them. Due to this reason people do not have the courage to violate the laws of the caste system.

(6) *Variety of racial strains*: The existence of many races in the country led to the formulation of many strict laws concerning discrimination since each race endeavoured to maintain its purity. In the medieval period of Indian History strict laws concerning caste were laid down to protect Hindu society from the Muslims.

(7) *Lack of education*: Lack of education occupies an important position among the factors which have encouraged the existence of caste system in Hindu society. Superstitions, traditions and mores breed freely among uneducated people. Thus lack of education favours caste system.

Conditions Unfavourable to Caste

And yet the bonds of caste have gradually weakened. The following elements have tended to weaken the caste system in the present century:

(1) *Modern education*: A major part in weakening the caste system is played by the modern education. It emphasizes democratic values such as liberty, equality and fraternity. It bears the stamp of the scientific and free thinking in the West. It has laid great stress upon human dignity. Thus the expansion of education, communication and association is proportionately weakening the ties of caste. It has encouraged intercaste marriages. The feelings of superiority and untouchability are being gradually eliminated from the minds of school going children of all castes.

(2) *Industrialization*: Industrialization has led to a decrease in the intensity of caste fervour because persons from all castes have sought and obtained employment in factories. According to A. W. Green, although the Brahmin has to take a prolonged religious bath in order to purify himself against the defilement caused by the mere shadow of a Shudra, yet it is not possible to avoid the shadow of Shudras in the crowded lanes of a city and the busy offices. As a result of industrialization individuals of all castes came into mutual contact in the factories, hotels, markets.

trains, trams and buses, etc., and the observance of laws concerning touchability became impossible.

(3) *Increase in the Value of Money*: In the modern age wealth is replacing caste as the basis of social prestige. A person adopts the occupation which appears to him to be the most profitable. The consideration in the choice of a profession is no longer caste but individual capability and the facility in earning wealth. A wealthy Shudra is more respected than a poor Brahmin. For this reason the ties of the caste are being loosened in the frantic race after wealth.

(4) *Social Reform Movement*: As a result of the influence of modern education there has been a flood of movements for social emancipation.

Social
emancipa-
tion

(5) *Means of Transport and Communication*: Means of transport and communication developed in India. This put an end to geographical isolation and the thoughts, customs, etc., of various places influenced each other. It became difficult to maintain the rigidity of caste in the whirlwind of communication set into motion by industrialization through such means as buses, trains, trams, cars, etc. In this connection Risley has written in *The People of India* that on a platform where the train halts momentarily one does not inquire the caste of the vendor while purchasing something from him.

(6) *Political Movement*: To end the discriminatory practices on the basis of the caste system was a part of the aims of the national agitation for a political awakening of the people in India. The objective of this national movement was the establishment of a democratic pattern of society in India. For this reason it made efforts to weaken the caste consciousness in the people.

(7) *New Legislation*: In the legal machinery of the British Government all castes were similarly punished for the same offences. The establishment of judicial courts deprived the caste panchayats of their power and they no longer retained the authority to punish a criminal. In this way the restrictions upon the opponents of the caste system were removed and gradually its laws also lost their meaning and significance.

(8) *Rise of New Social Classes*: New classes are appearing in Hindu society based on economic status. These social classes are replacing the caste. The organization of castes was vertical and

that of economic classes is horizontal. As the class consciousness is increasing caste consciousness is decreasing.

(9) *Country's Freedom*: The most severe shock to the caste system was the country's gaining freedom from British rule. Para 15(2) of the constitution of Independent India declared all citizens equal. Thus the fortress of the caste system collapsed. According to the *Untouchability Crime Act of 1955* it is a crime to prevent anyone from using a public place. The respect once accorded to the caste system dwindled through the influence of the rapid growth of the means of transport, educational facilities, industrialization, the democratic method of Government etc.

In spite of the presence of so many unfavourable circumstances the caste system continues to exist in an aggravated condition in the country and at some places it has become stronger through being identified with political interests.

Some Trends in Caste

The disorganization of the caste system has led some to infer that in the future the caste system will cease to exist. But some scholars have refuted this doubt. According to G. S. Ghurve there is no fear of the extinction of the caste system in the near future due to the following two conditions:

(1) *Elections based on Casteism*: On the establishment of a democracy in India the administrative machinery is operated by representatives elected by the people. The method of election has done much to encourage the caste system because the candidates want to achieve their end by drumming the cause of casteism among the voters. In this way people are asked to vote for their caste candidate and this casteism is maintained by the elected leaders after the elections are over. Political parties sponsor only that candidate for election in a particular area whose caste is the most numerous among the voters.

(2) *Special Constitutional Provisions for Backward Classes*: The Indian Constitution has provided for the protection of the backward and scheduled castes. Some posts have been reserved for them in Government services. They are given all types of facilities and special scholarships for education. All these special rights have encouraged casteism very much in the backward castes since the caste is proving very beneficial to them because of these prerogatives.

In India, on the one hand, the caste is becoming weaker due to the influence of such factors as industrialization, urbanization, increase in the means of transportation, popularity of English education, political and social awakening, democratic Government and laws abolishing untouchability, etc., and on the other such new organizations as labour unions, etc., on the basis of occupation, post, capacity etc., are being established. Due to an increase in the desire for money caused by the influence of Western education, the sense of superiority or inferiority is now based on wealth and social power rather than on caste. The class consciousness, based on occupations, etc., is replacing the caste consciousness.

All these changes led people to believe that the caste system will generally take on the form of a class system. But while, on the one hand, class consciousness seems to be progressing, on the other one can see progress in casteism as well. For people who are specially gifted in a particular occupation, other occupations are very limited in India and the paths to those that are available are closed. Children of those parents who have a small income or who have no wealth look out only for service. Most commonly, in the biggest business institutions and sometimes even in educational institutions what happens is that the people who are employed in various posts belong to the castes of the proprietors, organizers and senior officials. Casteism of a similar type prevails also in Government Services and political elections. Hence it cannot be asserted that at the present time the caste is disappearing and classism is increasing. Actually, in India casteism is being transformed into classism.

Future of the Caste System

It is difficult to make an unqualified statement concerning the future of the caste system in India. It is certainly true that the restrictions of marriage, diet, mode of life, behaviour, etc., based on the caste system are breaking down. But, as has been described previously, casteism is increasing and caste system is being encouraged by the mode of election and the Government protection of backward classes. Actually, it seems more or less definite that there is no possibility of the caste system being eliminated from the Indian society in the near future.

The root of the caste system goes deep in Hindu society and at its base are the important and beneficial principles of division of

labour, specialisation, etc. Foreign invaders made their best efforts to wipe out the Hindu caste. But inspite of all efforts of the Muslims and Christians not much change was wrought in the caste system. It has definitely been affected somewhat by the influence of Western education and Western culture. And its form has undergone a vast change. There is no room for doubting that this form of the caste system will change further in future, it may even change beyond recognition. It will also be influenced by the development of the sense of democracy and nationalism, industrial progress and by new political and economic movement.

Casteism

What is Casteism ?

Casteism is partial or one-sided loyalty in favour of a particular caste. When a mode of thinking assumes the form of an ism, it becomes rigid and partial. The sense of caste, when it implies a specific status in society, does not mean casteism. It is converted into casteism only when the tendency to consider the interest of one's own caste as opposed to the other castes is attached to it. Due to it the members of one caste do not hesitate in dealing fatal blows to the interests of the other castes, if the interests of their own caste are furthered in so doing. In brief, casteism is a blind group loyalty towards one's own caste or sub-caste which does not care for the interests of other castes and seeks to realise the social, economic, political and other interests of its own group. This definition of casteism includes all the important definitions of the concept and tends to clarify further the political aspect of casteism.

Causes of Casteism

Some of the many causes of casteism are as follows:

(1) *Sense of caste prestige*: The most important cause of casteism is the desire of people belonging to a particular caste to enhance the prestige of their own caste and in so doing see no wrong in adopting even the most down-graded and deleterious methods. But the prestige of the caste can be maintained only on the ground that every opportunity should be availed of in order to improve the social status of members. In order to achieve this objective every

caste provides its members with all possible privileges in order to raise their social status. This tends to increase casteism.

(2) *Marriage restrictions*: Under the caste system the restrictions that apply to marriage turn every caste into a monogamous group in which each individual looks upon himself as related in some way to all the others and for this reason the solidarity within caste group increases which in its turn encourages casteism.

(3) *Urbanization*: With the advent of the tendency to urbanization, it became possible for all castes to collect in large numbers in towns. At the same time the members of various castes had to face various complex problems as a result of which it became necessary to provide security for them on a communal basis. Casteism is spreading because of the necessity to fulfil this need of security.

(4) *Increase in the means of transport and propaganda*: One factor that has assisted the development of casteism is the increase in the means of transport and propaganda because this improvement has led to the establishment of intimate relationships between members of a caste who were previously separated because of distance. And the feeling of casteism is being rapidly propagated through the medium of newspapers and communal magazines

Consequences of Casteism

On the one hand, casteism serves to further the interests of a small number of individuals but on the other hand, it is proving harmful to the nation as a whole. Some of the major consequences of casteism are the following:

(1) *Impediment to the growth of nationalism*: Casteism hinders the growth and development of nationalism. On the one hand casteism has divided Indian society into many compartments while, on the other hand, a lot of tension and conflicts have been created on the basis of casteism between these various groups.

(2) *Impediment to democracy*: Most of the professional leaders in the political field exploit casteism and at election time ask the people to vote for them on communal considerations and they also succeed in their evil designs. This sometimes results in the election of unscrupulous individuals who do not hesitate in neglecting

common good in the consideration and promotion of caste. In fact, the glories of casteism are sung even behind the scenes where there is professed equality. Thus casteism has been fatal to democracy. As K. M. Panikkar has rightly said, "In fact, no organization of society on the basis of equality is possible so long as the sub-caste and the joint family exist."²

(3) *Corruption*: Men inspired by the sense of casteism try to provide all kinds of facilities to people who belong to their own castes and in doing so they resort to all kinds of immoral and corrupt activities.

(4) *Hinderance in industrial efficiency*: Because the appointments to Government and private services are made on the basis of caste, there seems to be continuing increase in the number of inefficient and worthless people. On the other hand, the efficient and able individuals do not get the opportunity to find employment. Thus a great obstacle is placed in the path of the nation's industrial and technological advance.

Remedies of Casteism

The following are some suggestions concerning the solution of the problems arising out of casteism:

(1) *Proper education*: What is most needed for a solution of the problem of casteism is proper education. The educational institutions should be able to provide an atmosphere in which caste distinctions are not encouraged while at the same time the children are allowed to develop a distaste for this kind of discrimination. A healthy point of view for casteism can thus be generated in the public. Casteism can be destroyed only by the development of new psychological tendencies and behavioural patterns.

(2) *Inter-caste marriage*: Inter-caste marriage provides an opportunity for two families belonging to different castes to come together. In this way, the seed of casteism is unable to strike root and even if it does so the resulting sapling will be so weak that it will subsequently be wiped out.

(3) *Lesser use of the word "caste"*: One way of solving the problem of casteism is to make less frequent use of the word "caste" so that there may be no traces of it left in the minds of the im-

pressionable children and they should not be imbued with the idea of caste distinction. In this way, at least it will become possible to destroy the tendency of casteism in the coming generations.

(4) *Cultural and economic equality*: Inequality in the sphere of cultural and economic welfare promotes jealousy and competition among various sections of society which later assumes the form of casteism. Hence, the restoration of cultural and economic equality of various castes is an important step towards the abolition of casteism from the society.

Suggestions for the Abolition of Casteism

Mahatma Gandhi has compared caste in society to the appendix in the human body. As long as it continues to enjoy health it serves its purpose but when it becomes diseased the only course is to eliminate it because if it is not removed it poses a threat to the existence of the entire organism. Caste cannot be declared illegal and then infringed. It is the foundation of Hindu Society. Nothing less than a revolution is needed to get rid of it. But the artificial simulation of a revolution proves harmful in the long run. Hence, as long as the society is not prepared to change the system and to adopt some other social order in its place, it is best to confine oneself to reformation. In this connection different scholars have expressed different views and have made various suggestions. Some of the important suggestions are the following:

(1) In Dr. M. N. Srinivas's opinion most of the shortcomings of the caste system can be removed and the door opened to democratic equality through adult franchise, five year plans, the provision of education, constant progress of the backward classes and the influence of the culture of higher castes on the living standards of the lower castes.

(2) According to Dr. G. S. Ghurye, the conflict originating in casteism can be removed by encouraging inter-caste marriages. Co-education should be introduced at the primary level and boys and girls should be given the opportunity to come together. This will lead to improvement of behaviour between different sexes simultaneously with which casteism will be actively refuted. Inter-caste marriage will be encouraged and the individuals marrying outside

their own castes will be instrumental in creating an atmosphere that will be fundamentally opposed to casteism.

(3) According to the suggestion put forward by Dr. V. K. R. V. Rao, in order to put an end to casteism and to deprive it of its very basis, the creation of some optional groups should be encouraged in which the communal tendencies of the individual can be manifested and organised. Casteism will decrease as the number of these groups increases because the individuals will have the opportunity to express their instincts and motives outside the caste.

(4) It is suggested by Mrs. Iravati Karve that in order to put an end to the conflict arising out of casteism it is necessary to create economic and cultural equality between the castes.

(5) According to Prof. P. N. Prabhu the conflicts created by casteism can be ended only when the internal aspects of conduct are influenced. For this it is necessary to try and develop new attitudes in the people. The cinema can do much towards the creation of these attitudes.

The notion of caste has been existent in Indian society for almost thousands of years. Today it has become an impediment in the progress of the country. It is necessary to change its form in order to ensure the development of national sentiment and the progress and success of democracy in the country. But this cannot be achieved in a span of few years. For this it is necessary to determine the extent to which caste system should be developed and then all governmental and non-governmental sources in the country should be employed for the achievement of that level of development. The first step would be to remove the idea of caste discrimination from the minds of the future generations. Co-education will encourage inter-caste marriages. Further, the idea of eliminating words that indicate castes from names should also be propagated and made popular. Caste committees and associations should be prevented legally and the Government should prevent appointments being made to posts on the basis of caste, whether in Government or non-government organizations. In this way, it is necessary to make efforts in every direction for the elimination of casteism.

Untouchability

In 1935 the Government of India prepared a list of castes for providing special facilities to the untouchable castes. This list included 429 castes whose total population numbered 5.35 crores. These castes were called scheduled castes by virtue of their inclusion in the list. They were also called untouchables. The problem of untouchability is a serious social problem in the Indian society.

Definition of Untouchability

It is extremely difficult to define untouchability. In fact, it implies those disabilities which were imposed upon the scheduled castes by the superior castes. In Untouchability Offences Act 1955, the word untouchability was given this connotation. According to it, "It is an offence to prevent any person on the ground of untouchability (a) from entering any place of public worship which is open to other persons, professing the same religion, (b) from worshipping or offering prayers or performing any religious service in any place of public worship or bathing in or using the waters of any sacred tank, well, spring or water course in the same manner as is permissible to other persons professing the same religion; and (c) from access to or use of a shop, hotel, public restaurant or place of public entertainment or public conveyance or hospital, dispensary or educational institution or charitable trust." Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and Mahatma Gandhi have also defined untouchability on the basis of some disabilities. In this way disabilities are a sign of untouchability. Dr. D. N. Majumdar has written, "The untouchable castes are those who suffer from various social and political disabilities many of which are traditionally prescribed and socially enforced by higher castes.", In brief, untouchables are those castes which are subject to some disabilities in every walk of life social, religious, economic and political. This definition will be further clarified by a detailed description of these disabilities.

Disabilities of Harijans

Untouchables suffer from the following disabilities.

(i) *Religious disabilities*: In India the Harijans were subjected to various religious disabilities in the society. They were prevented

from entering temples, monasteries and cremation grounds, and could not make use of them because it was believed that these places would become impure by their touching them. In this way the Harijans could not worship in the temples. Their presence was considered sufficient to defile the gods, let alone their worshippers.

But the disabilities imposed upon the Harijans in India are pre-eminently social and economic, the removal of which will, in itself, eliminate their backward condition in respect of political status. Actually, the religious disabilities of the Harijans are also their social disabilities.

(ii) *Social disabilities*: In the social sphere the disabilities of the Harijans are the following:

1. *Prevention from the use of public roads*: Hudson has written that the presence of a particular untouchable caste in Tamil Nadu was considered so derogatory that their members were prevented from using the public roads in the day time and consequently they were obliged to do their work at night. Their shadow was enough to defile the members of the higher castes. Thus upon seeing the members of the higher castes, Harijans would adopt a prostrate posture upon the ground so that their shadow may not fall on the members of higher castes.

2. *Prevention from the use of public wells*: In almost all Indian villages the Harijans were forbidden to use the well for drawing water, and this convention was enforced with a greater or lesser degree of strictness. In Bengal they were permitted to come near the well but not allowed to draw water from it. Only a higher caste Hindu could draw water for them. In some other states the untouchables were not permitted even to approach the well.

3. *Prevention from entering schools*: The Harijan children did not have the right to enter the schools because if they sat down to study along with other children it would have defiled the latter. On the other hand there were no separate schools for the Harijans. Actually, education was not even considered necessary for them. If they insisted upon being taught then they had to sit out in the open sun in order to study. In many religious texts education has been forbidden to the lower castes.

4. *Other social restrictions*: Besides the foregoing disabilities the Harijans were subjected to many other social restrictions. In

marriage the Harijan bride and bridegroom were not allowed to sit in the palanquin. Among the Chamars the bridegroom was harassed by the Rajputs if he sat on a horse. The Harijans were not allowed the freedom of adopting a respectable outfit. The hair-dresser would not tend their hair. The washerman would not wash their clothes and the shopkeeper would not supply them with food.

(iii) *Economic disabilities*: The disabilities of the Harijans were not restricted only to the social sphere but extended into the economic sphere too. Due to their social disabilities they could not retain any interest in or enthusiasm for their occupation. They did not have the permission to engage in the professions of the higher castes. Their conventional occupations were dirty and soiled and their means for earning their bread and butter were limited. Even now there is next to no education among the Harijans. They are burdened with debt while poverty and famine conditions prevail among them. They live in dirty slums in which new diseases are always making their life miserable. There is no medical provision for them, since the high caste doctor becomes defiled merely by touching them.

Caste and Untouchability

There are many racial, religious and social causes of untouchability in India. The major cause is the caste system. The untouchable castes are the most inferior among the numerous castes in Hindu community. To the caste system is attached the sense of high and low, which is the fundamental cause of untouchability. Another cause of untouchability is the prevalence of many taboos in the caste system. Just as there are taboos for the higher castes regarding inter-marrying, eating and mixing with the lower castes, in the same way taboos were created, for preventing, touching and even seeing of the lower castes which did the dirty work, as a consequence of the feeling of superiority and inferiority. These castes came to be called the untouchables. In this way untouchability in India is based upon the caste system. Untouchability is the result of the sense of superiority and inferiority, and social taboos. In *Caste and Class in India*, Ghurye has written that in Poona, during the reign of the Marathas, the untouchable castes Mahar and Mang

were not allowed to enter the gates of towns between nine in the morning and three o'clock in the afternoon because the shadows are at their longest at this time and there is the fear of the higher Brahmins being defiled. In Maharashtra the Mahar caste could spit only in small containers tied around their neck because were they to spit upon the road it might defile some superior Hindu by sticking to his foot. Often if some Brahmin passed their way the Mahars had to destroy the imprints of their feet with brambles and lie down at a distance in order to protect the Brahmin from their shadow. In Malabar the Shanar had to keep a distance of twenty-four feet from the Brahmin, the Tiya a distance of thirty-six feet, and the Pulayan ninety-six feet. It is obvious that the biggest cause of untouchability is the segregation of relations within the castes.

Causes of Untouchability

But all this does not mean that untouchability is caused solely by the caste system and the elimination of the latter would mean the automatic eradication of the former. Actually, there are other causes of untouchability besides the caste system. In *Caste in India* J. H. Hutton writes, "The origin of the position of exterior castes is partly racial, partly religious and partly a matter of social custom." In this way, the three fundamental causes of untouchability are racial, religious and social factors.

1. *Racial Factors*: The fundamental causes of untouchability are racial factors. The victor always considers himself superior to the vanquished and wants to be spared the latter's influence. This is no less true in the case of races. In the opinion of some scholars the Aryan invaders designated the non-Aryan races settled in India with some derogatory names and considered them untouchable. In Assam the Ao branch of the Naga tribe is not allowed to wear ivory ornaments on both arms. According to Hutton, this restriction has been imposed upon the Ao people because they are different from the other Naga Tribes from the racial viewpoint. In Garhwal the bride and bridegroom belonging to the artisan and Harijan castes, which had low social status, were not allowed the use of the palanquin or the horse. The cause of this has been explained by some sociologists to be the advent of the higher castes from the plains

into the native homeland of the artisans and Harijans. These examples prove that racial distinctions have some hand in the origin of the custom of untouchability. Dr. D. N. Majumdar has written correctly, "The disabilities of the so called 'depressed' castes are not ceremonial but probably founded on racial and cultural differences." ⁴

2. *Religious factors*: Religious beliefs and conventions are also causes of untouchability. In religion much importance is attributed to purity and divinity. Thus it was considered essential to keep away from the people who engaged in impure occupations. In the words of Dr. Ghurye, "Idea of purity, whether occupational or ceremonial, is found to have been a factor in the genesis of caste or the very soul of the idea and practice of untouchability." ⁵ It was the sense of purity which led to the sweepers and cobblers being designated as untouchables in Hindu society. Besides purity, another cause of the origin of untouchability is social taboos. Inter-marriage among castes, consumption of the object of totem, or its disrespect in any way are forbidden. Besides these there are a number of other taboos prevalent in the castes like avoiding a washerman because he washes clothes seeped in the secretion of the women's menstrual cycle. Thus, in the Vol. I of *Census of India* Hutton has written, "There can be little doubt that the idea of untouchability originates in taboo."

4. *Social Factors*: Social customs and conventions shared the burden of maintaining the untouchability recognised by the religious and racial causes. Social conventions are so influential that even the members of the untouchable castes dare not violate the customs of untouchability. In the *Hindu* of 24th December, 1932, it was written about the Puraadavanan caste established in the Tinneveli district of Madras that they are not only considered untouchable but even unpresentable, and they cannot leave their dwelling places in the day time because there is a fear of their defiling the other castes. They wash their clothes at night. When Thakkar Bappa went to meet them they came out only upon extreme entreaty and when they came their bodies were trembling because they were burdened with the social stigma of untouchability.

In this way, the racial, religious and social factors are the major ones among the causes of the origin of untouchability.

Efforts to Eradicate Untouchability

There have been numerous governmental and non-governmental efforts towards the eradication of untouchability in India and the improvement in the condition of the untouchables. The governmental effort is directed towards the prevention of untouchability on the one hand and improvement in the condition of the untouchables on the other. In Article 46 of the Indian Constitution much emphasis has been laid upon the spread of education among the backward castes and the protection of their economic interests.

The Indian Constitution declares the equality of all citizens of India. The following Articles in the Constitution provide for the eradication of untouchability.

Article 15(1): The state will not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth, or any of them.

(2) No citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them, be subject to any disability, restriction or condition with regard to:

(a) Access to shops, public restaurants, hotels and places of public entertainment, or

(b) The use of wells, tanks, bathing ghats, roads and places of public resort maintained wholly or partly out of state funds, or dedicated to the use of the general public.

Article 16(1): There shall be equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the state.

(2) No citizen shall on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, descent, place of birth, residence or any of them, be ineligible for or discriminated against in respect of any employment or office under the state.

(3) Nothing in this article shall prevent Parliament from making any law prescribing, in regard to a class or classes of employment or appointment to any office under any state specified in the First

Schedule or any local or other authority within its territory, any requirement as to residence within that state prior to such employment or appointment.

Article 17: 'Untouchability' is abolished and its practice in any form forbidden. The enforcement of any disability arising out of 'Untouchability' shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law.

The following provision has been made for the eradication of untouchability in the Directive Principles of State Policy in the Indian Constitution:

Article 26: The government will develop the economic and educational interests of the weakest classes, especially scheduled castes and scheduled backward castes, with special precautions and will protect them from social injustice and all kinds of exploitation.

Article 46: The state shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people and in particular, of the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.

Article 164: Provided that in the state of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa, there shall be a Minister in-charge of tribal welfare who may in addition be in-charge of welfare of the scheduled castes and backward classes or any other work.

Article 320 (1): Seats shall be reserved in the house of the people for:

- (a) The scheduled castes;
 - (b) The scheduled tribes except the scheduled tribes in the tribal areas of Assam; and
 - (c) The scheduled tribes in the autonomous districts of Assam.
- (2) The number of seats reserved in any state for the scheduled castes or the scheduled tribes under clause (1) shall bear, of as nearly as may be, the same proportion to the total number of seats allotted to that state in the house of the people as the population of the scheduled castes in the state of the scheduled tribes in the state or part of the state as the case may be in respect of which seats are so reserved, bears to the total population of the state.

Article 332 (1): Seats shall be reserved for these scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes, except the scheduled tribes in the tribal areas of Assam in the Legislative Assembly of every state specified in the Part A or Part B of the First Schedule.

(2) Seats shall be reserved also for the autonomous districts in the Legislative Assembly of Assam.

Article 335: The claims of the members of the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes shall be taken into consideration, consistently with the maintenance of efficiency of administration, in the making of appointments to services and posts in connection with the affairs of the union or of a state.

Article 338 (1): There shall be a special officer for the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes to be appointed by the President.

(2) It shall be the duty of the special officer to investigate all matters relating to the safeguards provided for the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes under this constitution and report to the President upon the working of those safeguards at such intervals as the President may direct and the President shall cause all such reports to be laid before each House of Parliament.

Article 340 (1): The President may by order appoint a Commission consisting of such persons as he thinks fit to investigate the conditions of socially and educationally backward classes within the territory of India and the difficulties under which they labour and to make recommendations as to the steps that should be taken by the Union or any State to remove such difficulties and to improve their condition and as to the grants that should be made for the purpose by the Union or any state and the conditions subject to which such grants should be made, and the order appointing such Commission shall define the procedure to be followed by the Commission.

According to the 17th Article of the Indian Constitution, untouchability is a punishable offence. In 1955 the Indian Government passed the Untouchability Offences Act in which any person forcing the disabilities of untouchability can be sentenced to six months imprisonment or a fine of Rs. 500/- or both for his first offence. For every subsequent offence the sentence will include both a term in jail as well as a fine. If considered necessary the punishment

can also be increased. According to this act the following activities were declared offensive: preventing entrance into public temples or places of worship, preventing the drawing of water from sacred lakes, wells, falls or spring, preventing people from the use of dharamshala, inn, hotel, river bank, cremation ground, water tank, water tap, educational institution, public hospital, public restaurant, preventing the Harijans from pursuing any general occupation, doing a barber's job or any general activities and harassing them or discriminating against them on the basis of untouchability at such times as religious festivals or in residential houses, business or profession.

Besides enacting laws against untouchability the Government of India also instigated propaganda against untouchability throughout the country. All the states observe 'Harijan Weeks' and 'Harijan Day'. In states and districts, advisory committees have been organised which increase contact between untouchables and superior Hindus. Books, handbills, posters and pamphlets are printed in Hindi, English and regional languages and distributed among the public in large number. Film and radio are also used as means of propaganda against untouchability.

Twelve and half per cent of the seats in services based upon all India competitions and 16 $\frac{2}{3}$ % of services to which selections are made in other ways have been reserved for members of the scheduled castes. When an adequate number of members is not forthcoming from the tribal groups, their reserved seats are also made over to the members of the scheduled castes.

Economic Improvement:

Realising the financial problems of the Harijans the Government have taken the following steps in the direction of their financial improvement:

(i) In nearly all the states of India laws have been enacted for defending the untouchables from the Mahajans.

(ii) In Bihar and Orissa the Harijans had to become slaves of the money lenders in the event of their inability to repay debt. Now this tradition has come to an end due to new laws.

(iii) In Andhra, Bihar, Orissa, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Uttar

Pradesh and Gujarat the Governments have turned useless and unoccupied land into cultivable land and distributed it among the Harijans.

(iv) The governments of Andhra, Bihar, Orissa, Assam, Madhya Pradesh, and West Bengal have enacted laws by virtue of which a Harijan cultivating land is to be considered its owner and cannot be deprived of it.

(v) The Governments are giving financial assistance to the Harijans in order that they may be able to buy agricultural implements, animals, manure, superior seeds, modern tools of agriculture, etc.

(vi) Assistance to Agriculture, Cottage Industries and Animal Husbandry is being given. In Assam, Bihar, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal the Harijans are being assisted financially as well as otherwise for the development of their cottage industries. Training centres are also being opened for teaching people and making them skilled in cottage industries. Animal husbandry and poultry farming are also being encouraged among the Harijans.

(vii) The Government of India is also providing aid to non-governmental institutions which are exerting for the eradication of untouchability. In 1954 alone the Indian Government aided the State Governments, Harijan Sevak Sangh, Indian Depressed Classes League and the Harijan Ashram of Prayag to the extent of four crores of rupees.

(viii) The educational facilities provided by the Government to the Harijans are in the form of free education, scholarships, books, stationery and other educational materials.

(ix) According to the Indian Constitution seats had been reserved in government services for untouchables for a period of ten years. Not only in central government services but also in state government services these seats are reserved even now. The condition of the untouchables improved due to the Admission to Malabar Mandir Act and Prohibition of Public Disability Act of the Madras Government. In order to arrange for the progress of the Harijans the Madras Government appointed a Labour Commissioner and enacted many laws for defending the Harijans from the landlords and also in order to provide them with land. The governments of other states also followed the lead of Madras Government. In

Uttar Pradesh two Parliamentary Secretaries were appointed for improving the conditions of the Harijans. Many co-operative societies were also opened for the Harijans. Many Harijan students were given scholarships.

Non-Governmental Efforts

Besides the programme for political awakening, the Indian National Congress made efforts for the eradication of untouchability. The attempts made by Gandhiji in this direction are well-known. As a result of his efforts the untouchables slowly got rid of their social disabilities. The doors of the universities, temples, public places etc., were opened to them. In the beginning the superior Hindus opposed these improvements but they later agreed to them. Besides the Congress many other political parties took part in the emancipation of the Harijans. Among them the work done by the Depressed Class Union, the Social Service League, Depressed Classes League, Andhra Deen Seva Sangh, Depressed Classes Conference and Scheduled Castes Federation deserves mention. But the Harijan Sevak Sangh had made the maximum efforts in this direction. In 1932 this Sangh was started under the leadership of Thakkar Bapa. There are many branches of this Sangh in Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Delhi. One hundred and twenty Boarding Houses are being managed by the Harijan Sevak Sangh. As a result of the efforts made by the Tamil Nadu Sangh 100 big temples were opened for the Harijans. The Sangh achieved notable success in opening the public places to the Harijans. Many Harijan students should be thankful to the Sangh for their scholarships which they got mainly due to the efforts of the Sangh. Technological schools have also been opened for imparting training in cottage industries and this too has come about mainly through the efforts of the Sangh. Among these institutions the Harijan Audyogik-Grah, Delhi, Harijan Audyogik School and Hostel, Kadambokam, Harijan Ashram, Allahabad, Harijan Audyogik School, Kanjivaram deserve to be mentioned. Institutions for women include Harijan Balika Vidyalaya, Sabarmati, Harijan Balika Sadan, Hugli, Anjani Harijan Girls Hostel, Bezwada, Kasturba Balika Ashram, Okhla, etc.

Suggestions for the Eradication of Untouchability

The methods of eradication of untouchability are now known to all educated people. The following suggestions can be made in this direction:

1. Education should be spread among the Harijans and this should include both general education as well as technical education. Education should be free, coupled with facilities of scholarship, books, stationery, hostels etc.
2. Laws should be formulated for legal protection against interest upon loans and deprivation of land in order to improve the financial condition of the Harijans.
3. The Harijans should be helped in every conceivable way so as to remove their economic disabilities.
4. The Harijans should be provided with land, animals, ploughs, seeds, manure and agricultural tools for agriculture. Financial assistance for cottage industries should be supplemented by technical training.
5. Laws should be formulated for preventing the Harijans from being subjected to social disabilities.
6. Laws removing the religious disabilities which burden the Harijans should also be enforced.
7. Public platform speeches, radio, newspaper, the press and other means of communication should assist in the propaganda against untouchability.
8. In spite of the enforcement of all the above mentioned measures, it will take the Harijans a long time to achieve equality with the superior castes. Thus, until they do so, some places should be reserved for them in the government services.
9. It is necessary that seats should be reserved for the Harijans in the legislatures for some time to come. Some people contend that this violates the democratic principle of equality, but the people who have been deprived of equality for hundreds of years need some privileges in order to be restored to the general level. Once they have become equal to the superior castes the privileges will no longer be necessary.
10. The eradication of the caste system is very essential for the removal of untouchability. Actually the caste system is the big-

gest single cause of untouchability even though it is not the sole cause. Thus the eradication of the caste system will also remove the tradition of untouchability.

11. It is necessary that there should be an ever increasing contact between the Harijans and the caste Hindus at the same time that all the above measures are being put into practice, so that the tradition of untouchability should be destroyed and the feeling of sheer disgust which the superior Hindus harbour for the untouchables as well as the sense of inferiority of the Harijans should be eliminated. This contact will reduce mutual discrimination and culminate in the untouchables attaining a social status equal to that of caste Hindus.

The Hindu Family

Characteristics of Hindu Family

Though the Hindu family has passed through several stages of development, since the times of Vedas, many of its fundamental characteristics have remained the same. The important characteristics are as follows :

1. *Joint family*: The most important characteristic of Hindu family is that it is a joint entity. In it the wife and husband, the parents of the husband, his brothers and sisters and also some other relatives live under the same roof. The management of the joint family is in the hands of the head of the family who is not always the earning member but generally the most aged. The members of the family have equal rights in the income and property of the family, howsoever they may differ in their earning capacity. The food for the family is cooked in the same kitchen.

2. *High status of women*: The women have always been given a very high status in Hindu family. Their presence has been considered to be necessary on religious occasions.

3. *Religion and spirituality*: The members of Hindu family are not connected merely by social bond but they are also bound together by religious and spiritual affinities. There is more emphasis on duties than on rights in Hindu family. Every member of the family follows his duties according to his status in the

family. In this respect the Hindu scriptures have elaborately prescribed rights and duties for every member of the Hindu family.

4. *Welcome of the guest*: Another important feature of the Hindu family is that a guest is always welcome in it. The Hindu householder provides for food and rest to the guest in whatever difficult circumstances he may himself live.

Chief Ideals of the Hindu Family

The institution of the Hindu family occupies a unique position among the institutions of family in different cultures of the world. Its chief ideals are as follows:

1. *Procreation*: The chief ideal of Hindu family is procreation. The birth of a son has been considered to be necessary from the worldly as well as the other worldly viewpoint. According to Manu, a man cannot even renounce the world without procreating a son. In different Vedas, Samhitas and Brahmanas the birth of a son has been declared to be necessary for paying off the debt to the ancestors. The word *Putra* signified one who saves a person from the hell of *Putra*. Thus in Hindu social philosophy the birth of a son is absolutely necessary even for religious and spiritual purposes.

2. *Fulfilment of dharma*: An important ideal of a Hindu family is the fulfilment of *dharma*. The word *Patni* signifies that a woman participates with her man in religious ceremonies. No man was permitted to carry out religious celebrations without getting married. Kalidasa has called the wife as the source of all religious activities. The *Grahastha ashram* has been called the basis of all other *ashramas* and the chief ideal of the *Grahastha ashram* is the fulfilment of *dharma*.

3. *Enjoyment of sex*: According to Hindu scriptures, of the four aims of life *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kama* and *Moksha*, the fulfilment of *dharma* and the enjoyment of sex are the two important ideals of the household life. The Hindu scriptures have seen the life from an integral viewpoint. The enjoyment of sex, therefore, has been given an equal status with the fulfilment of *dharma*. According to Vatsyayana, a man in his life span of 100 years should gather knowledge in childhood, enjoy sex in youth and attain *dharma*

and liberation in the old age. Thus the ideals of Hindu family are based on a harmony of enjoyment and renunciation.

Changes in the Ideals of Hindu Family

The influence of Western culture in modern times has led to some changes in the ideals of Hindu family. Formerly, man used to aspire for a good number of sons. But now family planning has become necessary due to economic difficulties. Again, no one believes in the ideas of heaven and hell and the necessity of the birth of a son for the other world. With the change in the status of women the desire for a son is not appreciably dominant than that for a daughter. The joint family has progressively disintegrated. Fulfilment of *dharmā* is no more the ideal of Hindu family. Thus the only two aims of a Hindu household at present are *Artha* and *Kama*. Of these the latter is more important. Therefore, at present there is more emphasis on biological and psychological satisfaction through the marital relationship. Love is gradually becoming the basis of marriage. Thus the ideals of Hindu family are gradually coming closer to the family in the West. The biological, psychological and economic advantages of the family life are being emphasised. And yet due to the nature of Hindu marriage as a religious sacrament, the essential core of the Hindu family is still maintained.

The Joint Family

Joint family is a group of kins of several generations, ruled by a head, in which there is a joint residence, hearth and property and whose members are bound with each other by mutual obligations. The most important characteristic features of the joint family are as follows :

1. *Joint habitation*: The most striking feature of the joint family is the living of several families in one house. In this the father, mother, son, son's wife and children all live together. According to Sir Henry Maine the Hindu joint family is a group constituted of a known ancestor and adopted sons and relatives related to these sons through marriage.

2. *Common kitchen*: As long as a common kitchen does not

serve the entire group, different families cannot be regarded as a joint family even if they live under one roof. The food for all members of a joint family, consisting of a father and mother, their sons and their son's children, is cooked in one kitchen. Brahaspati has said that these people have the same kitchen and their ancestors, Gods and Brahmins are worshipped at the same place. In this way, by having one kitchen in the joint family, other activities are also performed by all members together. The moment the kitchen is separated, the joint family ceases to exist.

3. *Joint property*: In addition to joint habitation and a combined kitchen a characteristic feature of the joint family is joint property. In a joint family, the ownership, production and consumption of wealth take place on a joint basis. Writing about the joint family, Mellay writes in *Modern India and the West* that it is a co-operative institution, similar to a joint stock company, in which there is joint property. The head of the joint family is like a trustee who manages the property of the family with a view to deriving material and spiritual benefit for the members of the family. The total earnings of all the family members are pooled. The head of the family makes proper use of it on behalf of everyone.

4. *Authority of the head*: Yet another characteristic feature of the joint family is the rule of the head. Maine calls him the absolute authority. But in practice he makes more use of persuasion and love than command. He keeps in mind the needs of all members and employs them according to their ability.

New Social Legislation

The joint family has been very much influenced by certain new social legislations in India. These have some direct bearing on the characteristic features of joint family viz., joint habitation, combined kitchen, joint property and the authority of the head. The following are the major ones among these social legislations:

1 *Hindu Married Women's Right to Separate Residence and Maintenance Act*: This legislation was enacted in 1946. According to it, under specific conditions a wife can demand alimony while living separately from her husband.

2. *Hindu Marriage Act*: According to para 13 of this Act, any husband and wife, who have been married either before or after the enactment of this legislation can, under specific conditions, apply to the court for divorce. This law was enacted in 1955.

3. *Hindu Succession Act*: This act became law in 1956. According to it, the daughter was given equal rights to the property of the father and the women also got the rights to dispose of, mortgage, and use their property in any manner they pleased.

Effect of Present Legislation on Joint Family :

The foregoing Acts of legislation have influenced the solidarity of the joint family. As a consequence of the Hindu Marriage Act, the number of divorces is increasing. Previously, the women silently suffered many injustices and outrages. The status of women was extremely low in joint families. Sometimes the mother-in-law behaved inhumanly towards them. Their husbands also treated them as they wished and yet the joint family did not disintegrate. Now having got the support of the law, women have initiated a strong revolt against this oppression which is leading to a disorganization of the joint family. With the enactment of laws providing for their separate maintenance and residence, the women no longer need to submit to oppression in the joint family due to financial considerations. Upon being maltreated they can now leave their husbands and live separately and can demand money from them in order to carry on their expenditure. This provision has dealt a severe blow to the joint families. One feature of the joint family is that of joint property. The Hindu Succession Act has influenced it adversely.

Now that women have the right to sell their property and the girls to share equally in the property of their father it is almost impossible to maintain the family property jointly. Hence the result is that the joint families are disorganised at a rapid rate. Modern legislation has put an end to male ascendancy. This too has profoundly influenced the organisation of the joint family. The wives in the joint family come from other families. Thus it is only natural that they should resent having to sacrifice their own pleasure for the well-being of the family. Previously they had to

suffer silently the doings of their husbands. Having got equal rights in almost all respects as a result of modern legislation, the women whose husbands earn more can now force their husbands to break off from the joint family and set up an independent establishment. The parents-in-law also realise their power. The husbands too cannot do what they will with them. They also have the same rights over the children as their husbands. Due to all these causes even the slightest misunderstanding results in a situation where separation from the family is the only course open to the couple as they cannot coexist with their relatives. Actually the causes of the disorganization of the joint family are not constitutional but mainly social. But there is no doubting the fact that the present legislation has also played a part in its disorganization.

The class of job workers constitutes a major part of adult Indian population today. For the sake of their job most of them have to live at far off places away from their ancestral home. Again, due to unprecedented rise in the cost of living and diminishing of the value of money very few are in a position to carry the burden of a joint family. In villages educated young men are going to cities in search of white collar jobs. In cities small residences, high rents and high prices make it difficult for persons to live in joint family. These and many other characteristics of economic life have led to disorganization of Hindu joint family.

Merits of the Joint Family

The chief merits of the joint family are as follows:

1. *Economic advantage*: The joint family system has proved to be a very advantageous institution from the economic viewpoint. It prevents property from being divided. Land is protected from extreme sub-division and fragmentation. Land when divided into many small pieces becomes an uneconomic holding. Besides keeping the land intact, the joint family also assists in economic production. In a joint agriculturist family the male members do such work as furrowing, sowing and irrigation. Women assist at the harvest. Children graze the cattle and collect fuel and manure. In this way, the co-operation of all members helps to save money which would otherwise be paid to a labourer. In the rural area the joint fami-

lies of such artisans as the blacksmith, carpenter, etc., also function as units in which men, women and children collaborate. Even among the middle and upper classes the family can obtain capital and reliable assistance from the joint family for establishing and expanding a business.

2. *Protection of members*: Praising the joint family system Shri Jawaharlal Nehru has said that the system of joint family is an insurance for the family members which has carried a guarantee for those who are mentally and physically weak. In times of crises the joint family can provide assistance to the children, the old, the insane, the widows and the helpless. The joint family is capable of providing much assistance at such time as pregnancy, sickness, etc. If a person dies, his wife and children are looked after properly in the joint family. In the joint family a place is provided for all members to which they can retreat at all-times and their honour, wealth and prosperity are protected collectively.

3. *Means of recreation*: The joint family is one of the best means of recreation. A stimulating atmosphere is created by the cumulative effect of the lispig talk of the children, love between brother and sister, mother's love, the reproach of the elders and the fun and frolic of the other family members. In this way the joint family also naturally takes over the role of a club.

4. *Development of personality*: The joint family system makes possible the ideal development of the good qualities of man. In the care of elders the undesirable and antisocial tendencies of the young are checked, they are prevented from straying from their path and they learn to exercise self-control. In the joint family young men and women learn the lesson of generosity, patience, service, co-operation and obedience. A sense of sacrifice replaces selfishness in the bosom of each member of the family. All members learn to obey family administration and to respect those older than themselves.

5. *Cooperation and economy*: The joint family fosters co-operation and economy to an extent achieved by few, if any, other institutions. A sense of cultural unity and an associational feeling exist among the members. There can be much economy in expenditure since a large saving can be made in the payment of

rent and in cooking for a large family unit. The joint family has been called "An ideal centre of cooperation and mutual aid."

6. *Socialism in wealth*: According to Sir Henry Maine the joint family is like a corporation the trustee of which is the father. According to Jathar and Berry, everyone in a joint family earns according to his capabilities but obtains according to his need and in this way to a large extent achieves the socialistic order of "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs."

Defects of Joint Family System

The following are the main disadvantages of the joint family system:

1. *Hinderance to the development of personality*: The most glaring defect of the joint family system is the hinderance to the development of the personalities of its members. In the joint family the head is the absolute ruler or administrator. This head is usually the oldest member of the family who looks upon men and women as children even when they attain adulthood and behaves towards them accordingly. In this way there is very little opportunity for the fostering of individual autonomy and freedom.

2. *Sad plight of women*: This is also a major defect of the joint family system and is at the same time an important factor in its disintegration. In the joint family, the daughters-in-law do not get an opportunity to develop their personality. They serve the entire family like slaves not getting any time to look after their own children. They hardly ever meet their husbands during the day and when they return late at night they either fall asleep or just gratify their sexual impulse. The invariable presence of other family members inhibits the bride and she cannot even tell her husband anything. In this way she does not receive love from any source. There is no limit to the injustice done by the mother-in-law, and the other relatives do everything to add to that suffering. In some cases this oppression becomes so inhuman and undesirable that women become fed up and commit suicide. Any natural love between the husband and wife or between the mother and children is prevented from blossoming by these contrived circumstances.

3. *Strife*: If the daughters-in-law oppose this oppression or if their husbands choose to speak in their favour the house becomes strife torn and a centre of conflict. When they talk back to their mother-in-law they are abused and even beaten by their husbands who are provoked by their mother. Hatred and jealousy between the wives of brothers may lead to a conflict between brothers which may assume dangerous proportions. There is continuous strife and fighting over the doings of children. Much of the time of the adult members is spent in resolving of petty problems.

4. *Laziness*: Due to common responsibility many people take their minds off their work and become completely lazy. In this state, the condition of those who literally break their backs and those who are very lazy is more or less the same. Hence laziness is encouraged. When a person can eat comfortably without exerting himself he is unlikely to indulge in any strenuous activity. And the wives of the hard working people tell them to desist from such toil as they do not benefit from it. Mostly, in the joint family it happens that some people have to exhaust themselves while others lead a life of utter lethargy. There is no dearth of such people in big and rich joint families whose entire routine in life consists of eating, sleeping and begetting children.

5. *More reproduction*: In a joint family the responsibility for the upbringing and education of children is shared. Thus no individual considers it necessary to lay stress upon controlling procreation. In the family, no distinction in the status of the members is made on the basis of their respective earnings and the corresponding number of children. The offspring of one member will be treated the same as that of the other irrespective of the high level of his earnings and fewer children. In this way, in a joint family no direct benefit accrues to any individual by family planning or by earning more. Consequently, the enthusiasm of the people in this direction loses much of its fervour and intensity, and they become lazy and procreate more.

6. *Poverty*: As a consequence of almost daily strife, the bad plight of women, absolute rule, lack of responsibility and blind procreation, the economic condition of the joint family becomes very unenviable. If the conflict is strong enough to bring about divi-

sion of landed property the condition becomes even worse. The property of the family being jointly owned, is sometimes allowed to go waste and through constant neglect it is gradually lost. Due to strict administration of the old men the younger people do not gain self-confidence and self-dependence, and they fail to adopt new currents of thought.

Thus the defects of the joint family far outweigh the advantages which accrue from it and have negated them. Consequently, the joint family is fast becoming disorganised. It is impossible to save the institution of joint family from disorganization, though its advantages can, with effort be reinstituted in novel form in the nuclear families.

The Hindu Marriage

Aims of Hindu Marriage:

The institution of Hindu marriage occupies a prominent place in the social institutions of civilized world. Hindu marriage can be defined as a religious sacrament in which a man and woman are bound in permanent relationship for physical, social and spiritual purposes of *Dharma*, procreation and sexual pleasure. Thus Hindu marriage is not merely a social contract but a religious sacrament. It results in a more or less permanent relationship between a man and woman. Its aim is not merely physical pleasure but spiritual advancement. It is not merely an individual function but has social importance. It exhibits an integral approach to the social institution. The chief aims of Hindu marriage can be summarised as follows:

1. *Fulfilment of Dharma or religious duties:* According to Hindu scriptures marriage is the basis of all religious activities. In the words of K. M. Kapadia, "Marriage being thus primarily for the fulfilment of duties, the basic aim of marriage was Dharma." *

2. *Procreation:* In Hindu family the child is given a very important place. According to Rig Veda, the husband accepts the hand of the wife in order to get a high bred progeny. According to Manu, the chief aim of marriage is procreation. Mahabharata has also maintained the same view.

3. *Sexual pleasure*: The Hindu scriptures have compared the sexual pleasure with the realization of divine bliss. According to Vatsyayana sexual pleasure is the chief aim of marriage.

Traditional Forms of Hindu Marriage

The Hindu scriptures admit the following eight forms of marriage:

1. *Brahma marriage*: In this form of marriage the girl, decorated with clothes and ornaments, is given in marriage to a learned and gentle bridegroom. This is the prevalent form of marriage in Hindu society today.

2. *Prajapatya marriage*: In this form of marriage the daughter is offered to the bridegroom by blessing them with the enjoyment of marital bliss and the fulfilment of *Dharma*.

3. *Arsha marriage*: In this form of marriage a mendicant used to accept a girl in marriage after giving a cow or bull and some clothes to the parents of the girl. These articles were not the price of the bride but indicated the resolve of the mendicant to lead a householder's life. According to P. K. Acharya, the word *arsha* has been derived from the word *rishi*, or mendicant.

4. *Daiva marriage*: In this form of marriage the girl, decorated with ornaments and clothes, was offered to the person who conducted the function of a *purobit* in *yajna*.

5. *Asura marriage*: In this form of marriage the bridegroom gets the bride in exchange for some money or articles given to the family members of the bride. Such a form of marriage was conducted in the case of the marriage of Pandu with Madri in Mahabharata.

6. *Gandharva marriage*: This form of marriage is the result of mutual affection and love of the bride and the bridegroom. An example of this type of marriage is that of King Dushyanta with Shakuntala. In this form of marriage the ceremonies can be performed after the consummation of sexual relationship between the bride and the bridegroom. Vatsyayana has admitted this form of marriage to be the ideal type. In *Taittiriya Samhita* it has been pointed out that this type of marriage has been so named because of its prevalence among the Gandharvas.

7. *Rakshas marriage*: This type of marriage was prevalent in the age when women were considered to be the prize of war. In this type of marriage, the bridegroom takes away the bride from her house forcibly after killing and injuring her relatives.

8. *Paishach marriage*: This type of marriage has been called to be most degenerate. In this type a man enters into sexual relationship with a sleeping, drunk or unconscious woman. Such acts were regularised after the performance of the marriage ceremony which took place after the sexual intercourse between the man and woman.

About the present conditions of the above mentioned traditional forms of Hindu marriage, Dr. D. N. Majumdar has rightly said, "Hindu society now recognizes only two forms, the Brahma and the Asura, the higher castes preferring the former, the backward castes the latter, though here and there among the higher castes the Asura practice has not died out."¹ This statement rightly describes the present position of the traditional forms of Hindu marriage.

Modern Changes in Hindu Marriage

Due to the influence of Western culture and English education, the Hindu marriage system has undergone considerable changes, the important among them being the following:

1. *Marriage is not held as compulsory*: In Hindu society formerly marriage was considered to be absolutely compulsory for both male and female. According to Hindu scriptures, a person who does not beget a son through marriage cannot attain heaven. The birth of a son was considered to be necessary for the well being of the ancestors. No man could perform *yajna* without a wife, Marriage, therefore, was necessary even for religious purposes. But due to the influence of Western culture many males and females do not consider marriage to be necessary these days. Due to economic difficulties also some persons do not enter into matrimony. The modern educated Hindu girl is not prepared to accept slavery of the male. She marries for love and if it is not forthcoming she refuses to marry. Many girls, specially those who are working, do not marry unless they get a suitable match and if such a match

is not available they do not marry at all. The educated men and women do not believe in the ancient religious values and therefore do not consider the marriage to be necessary.

2. *Breaking of the taboos of Sagotra and Saptravar marriages:* Ancient Hindu tradition forbids the marriage of persons belonging to the same *Gotra* and *Pravara*. This very much restricts the field of the choice of a mate. Therefore, at present educated persons are gradually violating this restriction. It has also been rejected by law.

3. *Opposition to child marriages:* In medieval India the custom of child marriage was very much in vogue. After the passing of Sarada Act, child marriages have become illegal. Another factor leading to the restriction of child marriage in Hindu society is the tremendous increase in women's education. Due to the custom of dowry also poor parents fail to arrange for a bridegroom at an early age. The boys also do not marry early because of late settlement in career.

4. *Permission of inter-caste marriage:* Formerly inter-caste marriage was considered to be wrong in Hindu society. It has now been legally permitted. With the increase of co-education, women's education and the democratic ideal of equality and liberty inter-caste marriages are now considered to be signs of forwardness. The bonds of endogamy are, therefore, gradually breaking and the number of inter-caste marriages increasing.

5. *Prohibition of polygamy:* Formerly a man was allowed to marry several women in order to get a son. With the increase in women's education the ladies are demanding equal rights in marriage. The Hindu Marriage Act of 1955 has declared polygamy to be illegal. No one can marry a second time while the former spouse is alive.

6. *Permission of widow re-marriage:* Due to untiring efforts of social reformers and educated persons widow re-marriage is no more considered to be wrong in Hindu society. Consequently, its incidence is now in the increase.

7. *Provision for divorce:* The Hindu Marriage Act of 1955 has introduced a significant change in the institution of Hindu marriage by permitting divorce under certain specific circumstances.

The above-mentioned changes in the institution of Hindu marriage are indicative of progress on the one hand and disorganization on the other. The increase in the incidence of divorce, the rise of the age of marriage and increase in the incidence of extra-marital sex relationships are indicative of disorganization in Hindu marriage. Changes such as the prohibition of polygamy, the restriction of child marriages, the permission of widow re-marriage and freedom in the choice of mate are healthy signs of progress. Thus, on the whole, it cannot be said that the changes in Hindu marriage in recent times have led to its degeneration. The sanctity of marital bond has, however, diminished. It is no more unbreakable. It can be broken if there is no love and harmony between wife and husband. In fact, the Hindu marriage system is passing through a transitional stage. English education, women's education, influence of Western culture, urbanisation and industrialisation have changed social values of the Hindu male and female. The institution of family is changing fast. Familial and marital disorganisation are interdependent. The disorganisation of Hindu family has created circumstances leading to disorganisation of Hindu marriage. Romantic marriages are increasing. This has led to an increase in the number of divorces. In spite of these fast changes it can be safely predicted that there is no immediate danger to the institution of Hindu marriage because of the psychological security which it provides.

Regulation of Marriage Endogamy

The rules of endogamy and exogamy regulate the sphere of selection of mate in a society. In the words of Folsom, "Endogamy is the rule that one must marry within one's own caste or other group. However, it seldom permits marriage of close kin." Endogamous marriage is that which is confined within the group. Actually, endogamy and exogamy are relative words. That which is endogamous from one viewpoint is exogamous from another viewpoint. In the sub-caste exogamy of Hindus the marriage is contracted outside the sub-caste but the same marriage would be endogamous from the viewpoint of the race or nation.

In India the following forms of endogamy are to be found:

1. *Divisional or tribal endogamy*, in which no individual can marry outside his own tribe or division.
2. *Caste endogamy*, in which marriage is contracted within the caste.
3. *Class endogamy*, in which marriage can take place between people of only one class or of a particular status.
4. *Sub-caste endogamy*, in which choice for marriage is restricted to the sub-caste.
5. *Race endogamy*, in which one can marry only in the same race. People of the Veddah race never marry outside the race.

Generally, the following can be the causes of endogamy:

1. Policy of separation meaning whereby the will to live in separation from others is the most important cause of endogamy.
2. When any woman of a group marries into another her children also belong to the other group and in this way the numerical force of the first group suffers. Hence the restriction of endogamy is imposed.
3. Generally marriage between people of dissimilar religions is not considered good. Hence marriage is confined within one's religious group.
4. Racial endogamy is observed due to racial and cultural differences.
5. At the root of caste endogamy and racial endogamy is the sense of superiority of one's caste and race and inferiority of the other castes and races.
6. People who are separated by long distance naturally do not prefer to marry one another. Hence generally marriage is contracted within one's own geographical group.

Roughly, the following are the advantages of endogamy:

1. It tends to maintain the sense of unity within the group.
2. Women are happier within their own group.
3. Other people do not gain access over the group's women.
4. The business secrets of the group are kept in tact.
5. Purity in the group is maintained.

The following are the defects from which endogamy suffers:

1. It shatters the national unity.
2. The scope for choice of a life partner is limited due to

which malpractices such as unsuitable marriages, polygamy, dowry system, bride price etc., are fostered.

3. It generates hatred and jealousy for other groups. This is the main cause at the root of casteism in India.

In this way, at the present time, it has become necessary, both in the national and the international interest, that the endogamous tie is broken. The unfortunate consequences of dowry and other similar institutions can be seen in the form of suicides committed by marriageable girls. Polygamy, unsuitable marriages and late marriages lead to corruption in society. One method of avoiding such consequences is to put a stop to endogamous marriages. Fortunately, these ties are being constantly broken by the effect of modern Western education and civilization.

Exogamy

According to Sumner and Keller, "Endogamy is conservative while exogamy is progressive." Exogamy is approved of from the biological viewpoint. It leads to healthy and intelligent offspring. But this fact applies only to marriages outside the group. This benefit cannot be derived by forbidding *sagotra* and *saprawara* marriages. In the Indian society more harm than benefit has resulted from exogamous marriages. Most people do not intently approve of marriages within groups but do so only when the group is considered as limited only to the children of one parent couple or to two of their future generations. There can be no benefit by declaring marriage within a group unlawful when that group includes a greater number of people. In the 1911 U.P. census report, Blunt calculated that in the higher Hindu castes, hundreds of possible relatives are negated by disallowing marriage in seven generations on the paternal side and five on the maternal side, whereas among the Christians this number was only 30. In *Hindu Exogamy* Karandikar points out that the system of exogamy is not prevalent in the lowest Hindu caste, that in Northern India there are hundreds of distinctions of exogamy among the sweepers. In this way the scope for the choice of the bride and the bridegroom becomes very limited which tends to encourage dowry. The daughter cannot be happy

even if a loan has been taken to meet the dowry because the parents of the bridegroom can never be satisfied as the value of the groom is rising. Consequently, the bride has to suffer much in her father-in-law's home. Other serious consequences of rising bridegroom value are the suicide of many young women and the mismatched marriages of many more. Being unable to provide sufficient dowry many poor parents marry off their daughter to aged husbands. Besides this, due to difficulties present in contracting it, marriage is delayed, and corruption in society increases. This injustice and corruption is further augmented by the widow hood of many women who have been suitably married. As a result of all these defects in the system of exogamy, laws of exogamous marriage in Hindu society are breaking down.

Forms of Exogamy

In India the following forms of exogamy are to be found:

1. *Gotra exogamy or marriage outside the gotra*: Among the Brahmins the prevailing practice is to marry outside the *Gotra*. People who marry within the *Gotra* have to repent and treat the woman like a sister or mother. The offspring resulting from her is believed to be heathen. This restriction has been imposed since people of one *Gotra* are believed to have similar blood.

2. *Pravara exogamy or marriage outside the pravara*: Besides forbidding marriage within the *gotra* the Brahmins also forbid marriage between person belonging to the same *pravara*. People who utter the name of a common saint at religious functions are believed to belong to the same *pravara*. Thus *pravara* is a kind of religious and spiritual relation. According to Dr. Altekar and Shri Dange marriages within the *gotra* and *pravara* were not forbidden in ancient India. These have been treated as forbidden from the time of *Dharma Sutras*.

3. *Marriage outside gotras among the Kshatriyas and Vaishyas*: Among the Kshatriyas and Vaishyas it is the *gotra* of the purohit which is taken into consideration. In these the ancestry is carried on not through the saint but some follower. Among the Rajputs the *gotras* start from the victors or the first man of the ancestry. Sometimes the *gotra* takes the name of the village where this first person lived. In this way thousands of *gotras* have come into being.

4. *Totem exogamy or marriage outside totem*: In most tribes of India it is customary to marry outside the totem. Totem is the name given to any specific vegetation or animal with which a tribe believes it has some specific relation. Among the Gonds exogamous groups are called Vanshas. The classification of these vanshas depends upon the number of gods they worship. People belonging to the vansha which worships 7 gods can marry only into the group which worships 5, or 4 gods. These classes are divided into other exogamous sub-classes of the totem. Among them marriage is forbidden.

5. *Village exogamy or marriage outside the village*: Among many Indian tribes it is the recognized custom to marry outside the village. This restriction is prevalent in the Munda and other tribes of Chota Nagpur of Madhya Pradesh. Among some tribes of Baroda marriage is forbidden within the village since its members are regarded as relatives. Naga tribes of Assam are divided into Khels. Khel is the name given to the residents of a particular place and people of one Khel cannot marry each other. The Garo tribe is divided into two Katchis or Phratries called Marak and Sangama, inter-marriage between which is prohibited. There are five exogamous groups among the Mikirs of Assam. There are three exogamous groups among the Ao and Lhotado Nagas and two among Lonte tribe. Erulia tribe of South India is divided into six sub-groups. Five among them can intermarry. In this way there are two exogamous groups among these people.

6. *Pinda exogamy or marriage outside the pinda*: In Hindu society marriage within the *pinda* is prohibited. There is no one opinion as to who can be said to belong to the same *pinda*. According to the *Mitakshara* school only those people can be said to be *sapinda* who descend from a common parentage. According to Brahaspati, offspring from five maternal generations and seven paternal generations are *sapinda* and they cannot intermarry. The opinion of Brahaspati is not universally accepted. In several parts of India the generation of the mothers is not considered to be *sapinda*. At some places the prohibition extends over three maternal and five paternal generations. According to the *Baudhayan Dharma Sutra* marriage between the offspring of the maternal uncle and father's sister is improper. But many examples of such marriages are forthcoming

from ancient India. In the south, with the exception of Namboodiri Brahmins among the other Brahmins, it is considered good to marry the daughter of one's maternal uncle. The Velum caste of Madras does not forbid marriage with one's niece, while in the Telugu-Tamil districts and among the lowly Brahmins this union can be contracted with the daughter of one's sister-in-law. In Northern India, generally *sagotra* and *sapinda* marriages do not take place.

Sagotra and Sapravara Marriages

Sagotra and *Sapravara* marriages are forbidden by Hindu *Dharma Shastras*. Vashitha, Gautama and Shankha *Dharma Sutras* state that it is not proper to marry even a maid whose *pravara* coincides with that of the bridegroom. In the Vishnu, Manu and Yagyavalkya *smritis*, the prohibition of marriage extends to the girls who are of the same *gotra*. According to Baudhayan, in the event of marrying a girl of similar *gotra* one should resort to a form of repentance called *Chandrayana* and should treat her as a sister or mother.

It is written in the *Satyashadh Hiranyakeshi Strotsutra* that *gotra* is the name given to the offspring of eight saints. These eight saints are — Vishwamitra, Jamdagni, Bharadwaj, Gautama, Atri, Vashistha, Kashyap and Agastya. The word *gotra* is found used in Vedic literature denoting the enclosure made to protect cows. On this basis Max Mueller has conjectured that people who kept their cows at one place were considered to be the children of one ancestral saint who lived here and were accepted as members of one *gotra*. According to Panini, the offspring of the grandson was included in the same *gotra*. But Patanjali accepts only the offspring of eight saints to be of one *gotra*. Medhatithi has clarified it that *gotra* does not mean that they are the offspring of a saint, born at a particular time, but rather that *gotra* is a traditional name of the *vansh* just as some are traditionally accepted as Brahmins. According to Vigyaneshwar that name is called the *gotra* which is famous in the tradition of the ancestry. According to Mitakshara the meaning of *gotra* is proximity of blood.

The *pravaras* are also in the name of ancient saints. According to Vigyaneshwar only the *gotras* of Brahmins are *pravaras*, the *gotras* and *pravaras* of the Kshatriyas and Vaishyas are dependent upon

their *purohitas*. There are no *gotras* and *pravaras* of the Shudras. Pointing out the difference between *gotra* and *pravara*, P. V. Kane has rightly stated that *gotras* are the names of those ancient saints who have traditionally been believed to be ancestors of an individual, but *pravaras* are those very old saints who were very learned and great and were the ancestors of even those who introduced *gotras*. The word *pravara* comes from the root *varana* meaning selection. Hence, producing evidence from Vedic literature, Shri Kane has proved that *pravaras* are the names of those selected saints which were uttered of his own volition by a person while engaged in performing *yajna*, a religious sacrifice. Later on, the number of saints of *pravaras* was counted and determined. This number is believed to be forty-nine.

Scholars differ in their opinions as to the cause of the prohibition of *sagotra* and *sappravara* marriages. In the book *Hindu Exogamy*, Karandikar writes that the Aryans adopted this practice from non-Aryan races who married outside their totem. Most people seem to think that people of the same *gotra* are related by blood. For this reason, *sagotra* and *sappravara* marriages have been forbidden in order to avoid the bad consequences of inbreeding. But actually, this restriction or prohibition is without basis because, as has been pointed out by Medhatithi and Vigyaneshwar, *gotra* is that name of an ancestor which has been traditionally handed down. Shri P. V. Kane has written that in ancient times while engaged in the performance of *yajna* the host uttered the name of very old spiritual saints and said that, "The offering I am giving or making to the fire is the same as that made by Aaurva, by Bhragu, by Shuchi and by Angiras. May my *yajna* be successful as were theirs." The saints so chosen of one's own free will were called *pravaras*. It is evident from these opinions that the words *gotra* or *pravara* are not indicative of any blood relationships. Then, actually *pravaras* and *gotras* are confined only to the Brahmins. The *gotras* and *pravaras* of Kshatriyas are accepted to be those of their priests. The history of *gotras* and *pravaras* is so ancient that people do not remember even the names of their *gotras* and *pravaras* and the *gotra* or *pravara* of an individual cannot be determined. And even otherwise it seems meaningless to forbid marriage on the basis of *gotra* and

pravara when there have been hundreds of generations in the interval.

According to A. S. Altekar, restrictions on *sagotra* and *sapravara* marriages were not found before 600 B.C. The word *gotra* has not been used in this sense in the Vedic literature. But according to Shripaad Dange social beings tied down by the *yajna* methods of the ancient Aryans could not even dream of marrying outside their own *gotra* or fire. The practice of not marrying one's own relatives that is prevalent among us today has been developed over a period of many thousand years.

Anuloma and Pratiloma Marriage

Inter-caste marriage means the union of a man and woman belonging to two different castes. According to sociologists, inter-caste marriage existed in ancient India. The strict laws of endogamy came into force only when the *varna* system was transformed into the caste system. This led to difficulties in finding a bridegroom as a consequence of which such malpractices as dowry, unsuitable marriages, bride price, etc., came into existence. The sole means of putting an end to such malpractices is the encouragement of inter-caste marriages. Two forms of inter-caste marriage have been accepted — *anuloma* and *pratiloma* marriage.

Although Manu looks upon marriage between people of similar *varna* as the best, yet he has found *anuloma* marriages acceptable. In the *anuloma* marriage system men of higher castes wed women of lower castes. There is ample evidence in Indian epics and other literature to show that the practice of *anuloma* marriages was prevalent. In 160 B.C., King Agnimitra of the Shung family wedded a kshatriya princess Malvika. Yagnyavalkya permits the Brahmin or Kshatriya to marry a Kshatriya or Vaishya girl but he does not permit them to marry a Shudra girl. But nevertheless Manu and Yagnyavalkya have written on the inheritance of sons born to a Brahmin by a Shudra wife. From this it is evident that such marriages did take place.

Pratiloma marriage is a form of inter-caste marriage in which men of lower caste marry women of superior castes. Many commentators

have accepted it. A Bramhim king named Kakustha Verma gave his daughters in marriage to Gupta kings.

Anuloma and *pratiloma* marriages retained their acceptability till the end of the tenth century because till that time there were not many cultural differences between Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas. Gradually, the rituals among them diverged further and further till in the 9th century this divergence became so marked that both these forms of inter-caste marriages rapidly vanished. In 1020 A.D. Alberooni writes that the Brahmins of the time considered it improper to encourage the three lower castes and did not hence take girls in marriage from among them. The writers of the 15th and 16th centuries mention the prohibition of inter-caste marriage in Hindu society.

The rejection and prevention of inter-caste marriage is based upon the notions of purity and the cultural differences between the various castes. But as a result of the influences of Western culture the cultural differences between the various castes in India are gradually being eliminated. A similarity in food habits, occupation, behavioural modes, customs, etc., is being gradually developed. There is nothing wrong with inter-caste marriages. And, even better, their popularity will help eliminate or remove such malpractices as dowry, bride price, unsuited marriage, etc.

Hypergamy

In medieval period much importance was given to nobility in Bengal. So hypergamy was very popular there. Every one desired to marry his daughter into the nobility though supply of eligible noble bachelors was low. Among the Brahmins the contracting of such marriage became their occupation and their livelihood. One noble Brahmin married with anywhere from 30 to a 100 girls. After marriage these girls continued to reside with their parents. The noble Brahmins migrated from their habitat in winter to earn money which would last them the year. In this connection Babu Abhaya Chandra has written that he knew two noble Brahmins of whom one had sixty and the other 100 wives. Each of these two had a notebook in which he wrote the names of the villages in which he had been married and along side wrote the names of the fathers of

his wives. Generally, it happened that father and son, and husband and wife met as strangers. Risley too has mentioned noble Bengalis with 50 and more wives.

Polygyny

In common parlance polygyny and polygamy are used synonymously. Westermarck has enumerated the following causes of polygamy in his *History of Human Marriage*:

1. *Enforced celibacy*: In the uncivilized tribes men did not approach the women in their period of pregnancy and while the child was being breast fed. Thus, due to this long period of enforced celibacy, a second marriage was contracted.

2. *Earlier aging of the female*: In the uncivilized tribes men remarried a number of times because the women aged earlier.

3. *Variety*: Upon being questioned about the cause of polygamy, a Muslim of Morocco replied that a person cannot live forever on a diet of fish. In this way the desire for variety is also a cause of polygamy.

4. *More children*: A son has much utility in the uncivilized society, agriculture, war and conflicts, etc., where numerical superiority is an important factor. Secondly, in these tribes the birth rate is low, while the rate of infantile mortality is high. Hence, polygamy is indulged in order to obtain more children.

5. *Social prestige*: The leaders of uncivilized tribes in the Congo exaggerate the number of their wives in order to prove their superiority. A single marriage is considered a sign of poverty. In this way where marriage is accepted as a sign of prestige and prosperity, a custom of polygamy is natural.

6. *Economic necessity*: In *History of Human Marriage* Westermarck writes that when a Zulu is asked why he has married a second time he is apt to reply that who will cook food when my only wife, if she is the only one, falls ill? In this way one cause of polygamy is economic necessity. In the Himalayan ranges of India the men marry many times in order to protect their property and obtain help in their agricultural activities. In this way they get cheap and reliable labour in the form of a wife.

Polygyny is of the following types:

1. *Polygamy*: In this one man marries many women. The above mentioned causes are causes of this form of polygamy.
2. *Bigamy*: In this one man marries two women.
3. *Polyandry*: In this one woman marries many men and lives as their wife.
4. *Group marriage*: In this many young men and women are gathered together at some special occasion and married collectively.

The system of polygamy is still found existing to some extent in most countries of the world. Previously it was very popular everywhere. In the words of Rivers, "It is the commonest form of marriage everywhere. So far as we know, it is not universal but is the privilege of the powerful and rich." It is found in China, Uganda, West Africa and Oceania.

Polygyny is advantageous in the following respects:

1. The practice gives a greater number of strong children because powerful men can beget children from more than one woman.
2. Cases of sexual infidelity are few because the husband finds the desired variety in his numerous wives.

But more disadvantages than advantages flow from polygyny. For this reason it is not considered good in any of the civilized societies. The following disadvantages derive from it:

1. The status of women suffers.
2. Jealousy, hatred etc., among the women increase and the full development of their respective personalities is hindered.
3. The financial burden increases and children cannot be brought up well.

Polyandry

Side by side with polygamy, practice of polyandry is to be seen in many parts of the world. It is, however, far less prevalent than polygyny. Generally, it takes two forms, as the following:

1. *Fraternal polyandry*: In this one woman is regarded as the wife of all brothers who have sexual relations with her. The resulting children are treated as the offspring of the eldest. This practice is found in Punjab, Malabar, Nilgiri, Ladakh, Sikkim and Assam in India. It also exists in Tibet.

2. *Non-fraternal polyandry*: In this one woman has many husbands with whom she cohabits in turn. It is not necessary that these husbands be brothers. If a child is born, one of the husbands is elected its social parent by a special ritual. This practice once prevailed among the Nayers of Malabar but is now almost completely defunct.

Causes of Polyandry

Although polyandry depends to a large extent upon local conditions yet its causes, to some extent, can be generalised. The following are these causes:

1. One reason of polyandry is the shortage of women as compared with the number of men.
2. Extreme poverty is another cause of polyandry which may make it impossible for one man to support even one wife.
3. An important cause of polyandry is the desire to limit the population.
4. Sometimes disutility of women in society from the economic viewpoint, leads to the custom of polyandry.
5. Desire to maintain the strength of the joint family is an important condition leading to the prevalence of polyandry.

Problems of Hindu Marriage

Though the institution of Hindu marriage started on a very sound footing in Vedic age, its condition deteriorated in the medieval period. Since then the institution has been facing some persisting problems. The following are the chief problems faced by the institution of Hindu marriage recently:

1. *Child marriage*: The problem of child marriage was very serious in Hindu society till the passing of Sarada Act, which fixed the minimum marriageable age of a Hindu girl. Since then the age of the marriage of boys and girls has been gradually increasing so much so that in some cases it is thirty for the boy and more than twenty-five for the girl. In fact the reasonable age for marriage is eighteen to twenty-two in the case of girls and twenty to twenty-five in the case of boys. The reasons behind child marriages in Hindu society were religious conservatism, endogamy, *sati*-custom, the custom of dowry and the joint family. The Hindu Marriage

Act of 1955 has fixed the valid age for marriage of the boys and girls at 18 and 15 respectively. These legal steps could not work immediately because of the wide-spread conservatism among Hindus, incompleteness of *prohibitive act* and the absence of female education. With the removal of these impediments in the path of restraint of child marriages, this problem has appreciably diminished in Hindu society.

2. *Widow remarriage*: About the situation regarding widow re-marriage in ancient India, A. S. Alteker has written: "Side by side with *niyoga* the widow re-marriage also prevailed in Vedic society." The custom of widow re-marriage, however, disappeared gradually and it was considered to be wrong as early as 200 A.D. This restriction on widow re-marriage resulted in the increase of immorality among widows, sexual exploitation of child widows, increase of prostitutes and the lowering of the general status of women in Hindu Society. It led to large scale conversion of Hindu widows to Islam and Christianity. Much can be said about the ethical justification of widow re-marriage. It gives the fundamental human right of marriage to the young woman who has untimely lost her husband. It eliminates the possibilities of the increase of immorality and prostitution. From the social view-point it results in the increase of the number of Hindus, saves the society from evils of religious conversion, immorality and prostitution. From legal view-point it ends the share of the widow in the property of her late husband, while on the other hand, it gives her the legal rights of inheritance, adoption of children, etc., in the house of her new husband.

Due to the untiring efforts of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar the Hindu Widows Re-marriages Act was passed in 1856. This Act declared the legal validity of widow re-marriage and laid down specific circumstances for its performance. At present though widow re-marriage is not very much admired it is not opposed in Hindu community. In the lower castes it was never seriously opposed. In the higher castes it is now gradually being accepted.

3. *Dowry*: According to Max Radin, "Ordinarily dowry is the property which a man receives when he marries, either from his wife or her family." The Webster's *New International Dictionary*

has defined dowry as "the money, goods or estate, which a woman brings to her husband in marriage." In brief, dowry is that money, property or valuables which the bride party *has to give* to the bridegroom party at the time of marriage. Thus the chief evil of dowry system is that the bride party is compelled to give it as a price for marriage, as otherwise, the bride has to suffer the consequences at the hands of her in-laws. It is hence that Altekar has rightly said, "It is now high time for Hindu society to put an end to this evil custom, which has driven many an innocent maiden to commit suicide." Some persons have pointed out to some alleged advantages of dowry system. They have maintained that it helps in the establishment of the new household of the newly married couple. It has been pointed out that the lure of dowry helps in the marriage of ugly and uneducated girls. These so-called advantages do not count before the glaring evils of dowry system. Some of the gross evils of this system can be seen in the murder of female children, suicides of young maidens, late marriage of girls, mismatched marriages, breaking of the settlement of marriages on the question of dowry, child marriage to avoid dowry, criminal activities of the fathers and the lowering of the standard of living, increasing family disharmony, corruption, mental diseases and finally in the hindrance to women's education. The evil of dowry is persisting because of the increase in the value of money, general poverty, unemployment, delimitation of the field of choice of mate, competition to get the bridegroom from rich family, etc. The evil can be restricted only by strict legal measures against it. Recently some sort of legal restriction on dowry was imposed by an Act passed by the government. This, however, has not been sufficiently effective. With the increase of women's education, incidence of inter-caste marriages and anti-dowry propaganda, this evil can be appreciably uprooted from Hindu society.

4. *Divorce* : Before the passing of the Hindu Marriage Act of 1955 the Hindu woman could not divorce her husband even though he made hell of her life. The Hindu Marriage Act has divided Hindu Marriages into valid, void and voidable. The Act has prescribed monogamy and declared polygamy to be illegal. It has

accepted the mother as the guardian of the children along with the father. It permits divorce in cases of adultery, change of religion, suffering from some incurable disease not contracted from the other spouse, renunciation of the world, not traceable for more than seven years, absence of co-habitation for two years after the decree of judicial separation and not following the decree for the restitution of conjugal rights. The wife can divorce the husband if he has another wife living or if he has been found guilty of rape, sodomy, or bestiality. The application for divorce can be filed after three years of marriage. In the meanwhile judicial separation is allowed on the following conditions:

1. Desertion of the applicant by the other party two years before the date of application.
2. Cruel behaviour.
3. If one party is suffering from leprosy or any other infectious disease for one year before the date of application but the disease should not have been contracted from the applicant.
4. Madness of the other party for two years before the date of application.
5. Co-habitation of either with some man and woman other than the husband and the wife.

After the court gives permission to divorce, the man and woman cannot remarry for one year.

Social Legislation Concerning Marriage

The Indian Parliament has passed the following Acts for reform of Hindu marriage, family and the status of women in Hindu society: Hindu Married Women's Rights to Separate Residence and Maintenance Act, Hindu Marriage Act, Hindu Succession Act, Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act, and Hindu Minority and Guardianhip Act. These Acts are collectively known as the Hindu code.

- (a) *Hindu Married Women's Rights to Separate Residence and*

Maintenance Act 1946: By this Act a Hindu married woman can claim maintenance while residing separately from her husband on the following grounds :

1. If the husband is suffering from some loathsome disease which has not been contracted from the wife.

2. If the husband behaves so cruelly towards the wife that her residing with the husband is undesirable or dangerous.

3. If the husband deserts the wife without her wish.

4. If the husband marries again.

5. If the husband adopts another religion.

6. If the husband keeps a concubine.

7. Other justifiable causes. But the wife cannot demand maintenance from the husband if she is guilty of adultery or conversion to another religion.

(2) *Hindu Marriage Act 1955* : This Act applies to all the members of Hindu society. It has made the following important changes in the institution of Hindu marriage :

- (a) According to this Act, Hindu marriages have been divided into three classes — void, voidable and valid.

- (b) By the provisions of this Act the minimum age limit for the boys and girls has been fixed at 18 and 15 years respectively.

- (c) According to this Act a Hindu male or female can enter into matrimony only if no spouse of either is alive at the time of marriage. Thus Section 5 and clause 1 of this Act provides for monogamy in Hindu society.

- (d) According to this Act the mother will be considered the legal guardian of the minor son or daughter after the father.

- (e) As has been already pointed out in the discussion of the problem of divorce in Hindu society, the Hindu Marriage Act provides for divorce by wife or husband under certain specific circumstances.

(3) *Hindu Succession Act 1956* : According to this Act the daughter is also given equal rights of inheritance in the property of the father, along with the son. The women have the right of use, sale, and mortgage of the property received through inheritance.

(4) *Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act 1956* : According

to this Act the husband has to take the consent of the wife while adopting a son or daughter. An issueless widow also has the right of adoption. The following conditions should be satisfied to make adoption legal :

1. After the death of the husband, every sound-minded adult widow has a right to adopt a son or give her son to another in adoption.

2. Every healthy-minded male will have the right to adopt a son but this will require the consent of his wife.

3. The unmarried adult women will also have the right of adoption.

4. The adopted person will be less than 15 years in age and normally unmarried unless there is a custom of child marriage in his or her caste.

5. A daughter can also be adopted and given in adoption. There may be certain undesirable consequences of the adoption of a girl by a widower and of a boy by a widow. Therefore, it has been specified that a widower or bachelor should be at least 21 years older than the girl. Similarly, the widow or the unmarried woman should be at least 21 years older than the son. Again, the age of the boy or girl at the time of his or her adoption should be less than 15 years.

The Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act provides for the maintenance of the adopted son or daughter, the deserted wife and widow, the disabled old man or woman and the helpless persons. In this connection the following important provisions have been made : (1) The Hindu wife will have the right of maintenance during the life time of her husband. The wife deserted by the husband or living separate from him by her own wish will have the right of maintenance under certain specific circumstances. If the husband keeps a concubine, changes his religion, behaves cruelly, suffers from loathsome disease, the wife will have a right of maintenance though living separate from the husband. (2) The widowed daughter-in-law and the grand daughter-in-law will also have right of maintenance. (3) The wed or unmarried daughter will also have right of maintenance by the father. (4) The minor children,

even if they are illegitimate, will have a right to claim maintenance from the parents during the term of their minority.

(5) *Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act 1956* : This Act prescribes for the following provisions in connection with guardianship : (1) The child will remain under the guardianship of his mother upto the age of five years. It is only after it that the father will be considered as the legal guardian. After the death of the father the mother will again have the right of guardianship (2) In the case of an unmarried daughter and an illegitimate son the mother will have the right of guardianship and it is only after her death that the father will get this right. The right of the guardianship of the married daughter will vest with her husband. (3) The legal guardian will have the right to do all such things which he considers to be necessary for the good of the minor child. But he cannot do anything contrary to his other interests. He will not have any right to spend, sell, mortgage or gift any portion of the property of the minor person under his guardianship. For the purposes of this Act the child below the age of 18 will be considered a minor and under the guardian.

Effects of Hindu Code on Hindu Society

The above mentioned Acts under Hindu code have widely influenced Hindu society. The following are important points in this connection :

(1) *Equal right to male and female* : The Hindu code provides for equal rights to the Hindu male and female in almost every field of life. With it the females have secured equal rights with the male concerning inheritance of property, adoption of son and daughter, remarrying after the death of husband, divorcing the husband in certain circumstances and marrying again. Thus the code has put an end to the exploitation of women in Hindu society. They have been given all human rights and thus do not depend on the male's mercy.

(2) *End of male's domination in family* : The Hindu code has ended the male's domination in Hindu family. Now, the hus-

band cannot adopt a son or daughter without the consent of the wife. In the case of the daughter the mother is the life long guardian. The husband cannot misbehave with the wife because if he does so she can not only get divorce from him but also claim for maintenance unless she remarries. The daughters and the widows have rights of inheritance of property. The father and mother have equal rights of guardianship of the children.

(3) *Abolition of polygamy* : Before the passing of Hindu Marriage Act the evil of polygamy was widely prevalent in Hindu society. The Hindu Marriage Act has put an end to it. Now the husband cannot keep a concubine or marry another woman in the life time of his wife. Thus the Hindu Marriage Act has established monogamy in Hindu society.

(4) *Restriction on child marriages* : The new social legislations have eliminated the evil of the child marriage from Hindu society. The age of legal marriage has been fixed at 18 and 15 for boys and girls respectively.

(5) *Increase in the instability of family* : With the provision for judicial separation and divorce the Hindu code has made Hindu family unstable. It has given a blow to the joint family. The number of divorces has increased. The marital relations have, however, improved because the wife and husband both take care to behave properly so that a condition of judicial separation may not arise. This has led to progress in the status of Hindu women.

(6) *Women's rights of inheritance* : The Hindu code has given economic equality to Hindu women by providing for their right of inheritance in the property of husband and father.

(7) *Equal rights of guardianship* : The Hindu Code has provided for equal rights of guardianship of children to both wife and husband. It has thus established equality in this connection.

(8) *Life insurance of the old and disabled* : By providing for the maintenance of the old, disabled, widows and orphans the Hindu code has established social security in this respect. It is like a life insurance to these persons.

The above discussion of the influences of Hindu code on Hindu Society makes it quite clear that it has improved the status of

women. It has met their age old demands of inheritance, adoption, maintenance, guardianship, separate residence and divorce. It has placed them on equal footing with the males. Though here and there it may have caused the breaking of a family but indirectly it has made marriage and family stronger by placing them on a sound footing.

This discussion demonstrates that the institution of Hindu marriage is dynamic. It has changed from its original Vedic form to suit the modern conditions. Westernization, secularization, urbanization and industrialization have been important factors in this change. The future, however, depends very much on the education of women. It is heartening that fast progress is being made in this direction.

Status of Hindu Women

The status of women in a society is the index of the standard of its social organization. The standard of a society rises and falls in correlation with the rise and fall in the status of women. Society is the web of social relationships. Of these social relationships those between male and female are the most intimate and stable. The Hindu society has always remained dynamic. The status of women in it has consequently always changed. A study of this change of status will on the one hand show the Hindu woman's fight for her rights and on the other hand the dynamic nature of Hindu social organization.

Women in Ancient Hindu Society

In ancient India the women were given an equal status along with men in almost every field of life. They received higher education and participated in the discussion of political and philosophical nature with male scholars. The Vedas, the Upanishads, the Mahabharata and the Puranas mentioned the names of the lady scholars, philosophers, poets and politicians in ancient India. In Mahabharata the wife has been called the better half of the husband. In *Aitereya Upanishad*, the wife has been called companion of the husband.

In Rig Veda the wife has been blessed to live as a queen in the house of her husband. The word "dampati" so often used in the Vedas characterises both wife and husband. According to Macdonell and Keith this word signifies the high status of women in ancient India. The wife and husband co-operated in different functions of the household. They together performed religious duties, enjoyed and carried out other functions. In Mahabharata the wife has been called the root of *Dharma*, prosperity and enjoyment. No man was allowed to perform religious duties without a wife. Thus like the status of the women in contemporary western world, the status of women in ancient India was based on liberty, equality and co-operation. What, however, made them different is the ancient Indian emphasis on spirituality and religion, duty and co-operation in family life.

Women in Medieval India

In medieval India, the status of women was very much lowered. The scriptures prescribed rules for child marriages which increased the number of widows. The rules of conduct for the widows were even more rigid. The ancient Indian ideal of the equality of male and female was finished and women were considered to be slaves of men. In Buddhist and Muslim periods, the status of women was lowered even further. In the Muslim time the custom of veil, and the custom of dying on the funeral pyre of the husband were prevalent.

Women in Modern India

About a century ago the status of women in India was almost the same as it was in the medieval age. Though it cannot be said that the exploitation of women in India has no parallel in any other country, it can be safely ascertained that women had to face much cruelty and exploitation in modern India. Even now the birth of a daughter is not an occasion of happiness for many Hindu families. Ordinarily, the celebrations of the birth of a son are definitely more joyful than those of the birth of a daughter. The daughters are not given equal rights with the sons in the matters of food, clothing education, etc. They are often married

Sati

even without their consent. In the house of the husband, their status becomes even worse. The husband, the mother-in-law, the father-in-law consider the bride as a servant of the family, whose only duty is to obey every one, to get up earliest and to sleep last, to eat whatever remains after others have eaten and not to complain about anything and anyone. If the husband deserts her or remarries or dies untimely, the condition of the woman becomes worst of all, for her family members believe that this calamity has befallen her because of her bad luck. The widow gets no share in the property of her husband, nor is any one prepared to marry her.

The principles of Hindu social organization were formulated by males, who kept the women without equal rights in the social life. For centuries, the Hindu women tolerated all sorts of cruelties at the hands of males. Some male philosophers even called them as the doors of hell as if the male was very much pure and great. The male made her a toy for the satisfaction of his desires and put the entire responsibility on her head. The widow was not permitted to remarry and males of the household tried to enjoy with her secretly. She was helpless to oppose all this and when some bad consequence followed, the entire responsibility was put on the head of the widow and she was turned out of the house. The helpless, weak and young widow was often forced into the profession of a prostitute. This is the story of thousands of prostitutes in India. The woman was asked to live as a complete celibate after the death of her husband. She was encouraged to die at the funeral-pyre of her husband as if in an effort to meet him in the heavens. The male could marry several times and the woman had no right to speak against him.

The Present Change

With the advent of women's education in India and the influence of the West, together with the efforts of social reformers of contemporary India, the above mentioned account of the low status of women in Indian society has changed. The women rose against the cruelties of the male. They challenged the prescriptions of Hindu scriptures, which gave them a lower status in social orga-

nization. The educated Indian women re-examined the principles of Hindu social organization. They found that they have been given an equal status in society by God. Hence they revolted wherever they were denied this equality. They understood the selfishness behind the principles of *sati*, restriction on widow re-marriage, child marriage, mismatched marriages, polygamy, denial of equal rights to women in property, etc.

The challenge given by educated women in Hindu social, economic, political, religious and family organization is one of the greatest challenges that Hindu society has faced in modern times. The society was compelled to give equal rights to women in every field of life. The Indian woman had not to fight a very long battle as it was in the case of her western sisters. With the achievement of freedom by India, she was given equal political rights. With the enactment of Hindu Code, she was allowed equal rights in matters of inheritance, adoption of the child, divorce and others.

The Demands of Modern Indian Women

Briefly, the following were the demands of Indian women in the modern times :

(1) *Abolition of child marriage* : In the case of child marriage the women had to face the evil consequences in the form of loss of health, early old age, untimely widowhood and others. Therefore, modern women have demanded restriction on child marriages.

(2) *Restriction on polygamy* : The custom of polygamy very much lowered the status of women in the family. They never enjoyed marital bliss which is only possible in the case of monogamy. They could not fully develop their personality. Therefore, modern women have categorically denied the right of polygamy to the male.

(3) *Equality in marital status* : Along with the restriction on polygamy, the women have claimed equality in all marital rights. They want to live as true companions of their husbands in every walk of life.

(4) *Right to divorce* : In the medieval times when the woman was not given the right to divorce, she had to face all types of

cruelties at the hands of an impotent, a mad, or a cruel husband which made her life impossible. The modern woman has sought the right of divorce in such conditions, for she married for love and could not stay with the husband if she was denied it.

(5) *Elimination of dowry* : In the present times the daughters remain a burden on the parents because of the custom of dowry in Hindu society. Their status is very much lower than that of the sons and their parents have to suffer much humiliation at the hands of their in-laws. Many fathers try to earn money through illegal means to get a suitable match for their daughter and to give sufficient dowry. Those who fail to do this, sometimes die with the desire to marry off their daughters. If the dowry is less than expected, the daughter-in-law has to suffer at the hands of her in-laws. The evil of dowry has led to the suicide of many a Hindu maiden and made others' lives unbearable. Therefore, the Hindu women have raised a voice against this evil custom. In the present times, however, nothing concrete has been done to meet this demand.

(6) *Right to property* : As the women were not given any right in ancestral property, their condition was always of dependence on the male. They depended either on the father or the husband or the son. Therefore in the modern times they have demanded an equal right of property with males.

Rise in the Status of Hindu Women

The following measures have led to the improvement of the status of Hindu women in society in modern times :

1. *Education* : In 1857 when Khurshedji, a Parsi gentleman sought the permission of the syndicate of Bombay University for his daughter to appear at the Matriculation Examination, the Syndicate categorically refused. Similarly, Miss Chandramukhi Bose was not allowed to appear at the B.A. Examination of Calcutta University. In 1977, however, with the efforts of the Vice-Chancellor Hobhouse, women were allowed to appear at the examinations conducted by Calcutta University. It was only in 1882 that two women for the first time received the B.A. degree of Calcutta University. After it there was such a strong wave of women's education in India that

now it cannot be said that Indian women are very much lagging behind men in this respect.

(2) *Movements of social reform* : Many movements of social reform in contemporary India did a magnificent work in raising the status of women in society. By the efforts of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Pandita Ramabai, Mrs. Ranade, Keshavchandra Sen, Swami Dayanand and Mrs. Annie Besant, much was done in the direction of restriction of child marriages, permission of widow remarriage and elimination of the customs of Devadasi and Sati. In 1917 the Women's Indian Association was established to carry out reforms in the condition of Indian women. In 1929 the different institutions for the uplift of Indian women jointly constituted All India Women's Conference. Later on was established Indian Council of Women which has done important work in the direction of social reform among Indian women.

(3) *Political awakening* : In 1930, Indian women participated in the Non-co-operation Movement launched by Mahatma Gandhi. In 1932 they were given right to vote in provincial and central elections. In 1936 they were given the right to be elected to Provincial and Central Legislatures. Since then women have increasingly participated in Indian political life. They have been elected to Legislatures and performed duties of a Minister or a Governor and even of a Prime Minister, in the case of Indira Gandhi.

(4) *Social legislations* : After India became independent, several social legislations were enacted to improve the condition of Indian women. The Hindu Married Women's Rights to Separate Residence Act, 1946 gave her a right to reside separate from the husband under certain circumstances. The Hindu Marriage Act 1955 classified Hindu marriages, determined the age for marriage, provided for monogamy and guardianship for the mother and permitted divorce under certain circumstances. The Hindu Succession Act of 1956 prescribed for equal rights of the daughter in the property of the father. The Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act 1956 permitted Hindu women to adopt a son or a daughter and to claim maintenance from the husband under certain circumstances. The Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act 1955 provided for the guardianship of the mother over the daughter throughout her life

and in the case of the son for first five years. These social legislations have considerably improved the status of women in Hindu society and granted most of their demands.

The above mentioned measures have led to an all-round improvement in the status of women in Hindu society. Attempts are being made to abolish the custom of dowry from Hindu society. Women are receiving higher education in large numbers and participating in almost every field of life. In Indian Parliament, there are a number of lady members. In State Legislatures, their number aggregates around 100. They have reached the high offices of Chief Minister. Many of them are well-known politicians of all India level. Others are getting fame in literary fields. In the field of sports, Indian women have excelled. They are now entering even the departments of engineering, police and military. The day is not far when they will achieve an absolutely equal status with males in Indian society.

Consequences of Women's Education

The above discussion of the rise of the status of Indian women makes it clear that education has played a very important part in women's regeneration. From the sociological point of view, women's education has the following consequences :

1. As higher education requires many years the educated woman marries at a late age. At least the custom of child marriages has absolutely disappeared due to women's education.

2. The purpose of education is an all-round development of the personality of the educand. Thus the spread of education among women in India has given them chances to improve their personality, to think independently, to choose their careers and their companions of life.

3. Education creates a sentiment of self regard in the educated person. The educated women, therefore, cannot helplessly tolerate any high handedness. They, on the other hand, claim equal rights with the male and revolt against all types of atrocities. Thus women's education has finished the domination of male in Hindu family and given equal rights to the female.

4. The provision of higher education for women, however,

leads to the complexity of the problem of her marriage. The educated woman is not prepared to marry a person who does not catch her imagination. Therefore, it is a difficult job for the parents to get a suitable match for her. This, on the one hand, results in very late marriages and, on the other hand, some women prefer to remain unmarried throughout their life.

5. The higher education of women creates a tendency to seek economic freedom. They compete with males in all types of jobs and professions. Most of them do not want to be dependent economically on the father or the husband. In western countries women's education has very much improved the number of working women.

6. The educated women do not marry for economic security but for love and marital bliss and if this is not forthcoming they tend to divorce the husband because they do not bother about meeting the economic needs. This tendency has led to an increase in the rate of divorce.

7. The educated women do not want to increase the family beyond a certain limit because, on the one hand, this reduces their health and, on the other hand, it restricts the chances of enjoying life. The uneducated women do not know techniques of family planning nor can they understand its importance. The educated wives can easily understand the techniques of birth control and can convince their husbands in this respect. Education improves the standard of living, while the increase in the size of the family lowers it. Therefore, with the spread of education among women, the size of the family has decreased.

The above discussion of the sociological consequences of women's education makes it clear that the rise of the status of women very much depends on their education. Higher education of women definitely creates certain difficulties in some cases but this is the necessary price that we have to pay for any social reform.

REFERENCES

1. Datta, N. K. *Origin and Growth of Caste in India*, p. 15
2. Kapadia, K.M., *Marriage and Family in India* (1958), p. 168
3. Majumdar, D.N. *Races and Cultures in India*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay (1958), p. 173.

Chapter III

MUSLIM SOCIAL SYSTEM AND INSTITUTIONS

The Muslims form an important part of Indian society and therefore the study of their social system and institutions is necessary for an understanding of the modern Indian society and institutions. This is all the more important because their social institutions very much differ from those of the Hindus.

Muslim Marriage

The social life of the Muslims is governed by the rules prescribed by their sacred scripture Quran. The laws of Muslim marriage are based on Quran. The marriage among Muslims is a social contract which aims at getting legitimate offspring. Muslim marriage meets all the requirements of a valid contract provided in the Indian Contract Act. For the purposes of marriage the bride and bride-groom both must have healthy bodies and healthy minds and should not have any type of illegitimate connections. Boys and girls of less than 15 years of age cannot marry without the sanction of their guardians. The marriages among minors or mad persons are declared void. No religious ceremony or formality is required to make marital contract valid if the above-mentioned rules are adhered to. The following are the three essentials of Muslim marriage :

(1) *Proposal and Its Acceptance* : Among Muslims the proposal of marriage and its acceptance should be carried out in the same meeting. The proposal of marriage is put in the presence of two males or one male and two females and it should be accepted immediately. If the proposal is made in one meeting and accepted in another, the marriage is not valid. The presence of two persons is for the purpose of witnesses. In the absence of witnesses marriage becomes irregular, but not void. Among Shia Muslims the witnesses are not necessary.

(2) *Marital capacity of the bride and the bridegroom* : In the Muslim Marriage, the bride and the bride-groom should possess ability and capacity to enter into marital contract. Mentally deficient or insane persons cannot legitimately enter into matrimony. The minors are married with the permission of their guardians.

(3) *Absence of impediments in marriage* : A legitimate Muslim marriage can be contracted only in the absence of impediments to it. These impediments are of two types : some which make marriage void, and others which make it totally prohibited. The latter do not make a marriage void but only make it irregular.

(i) *Polygamy* : The marriage of a woman becomes void if her other husband is alive. The males, however, have a right to marry three women other than the present wife. The marriage with a fifth woman is void.

(ii) *Marriage with near relatives* : Muslim marriage is declared void if it is contracted with certain very near relatives, for example, ascendants, such as the mother, grand-mother, mother-in-law, etc, descendents such as daughter, grand-daughter, etc., among real sisters and brothers, with the neice, grand-daughter of the brother, daughter-in-law, wife of the grand-son or the wife of the son or the wife of the son of the daughter.

(iii) *Marriage with idol worshippers* : Muslim religion forbids idol worship. The marriage of a Muslim male or female with an idol worshipper, therefore, is declared to be void.

(iv) *Marriage among the insane and minors* : The marriages among the insane and the marriages of minors without the permission of the guardians are considered to be void among Muslims.

Muslim marriages contracted in the following circumstances are declared to be irregular :

(i) *Marriage with fifth woman* : Islam forbids marriage with a fifth woman while the other four are alive. Such a marriage, however, can be regularised by divorcing one of the former four wives. John Gunther has written that Ibn Saud, the founder of Saudi Arabia, used to divorce one of his four wives before going on a journey, so that he may be entitled to marry any woman he may like during the course of his journey. He thus married legally at least 120 women.

(ii) *Absence of witnesses* : Among the Sunni Muslims the absence of witnesses in a marital contract makes it irregular. Among the Shia Muslims, however, the presence of witness is not considered necessary.

(iii) *Marriage with followers of other religions* : According to the Shia rule of marriage the bride and the bride-groom both must be Muslims in order to contract a valid Muslim marriage. But the temporary form of Muslim marriage known as Muta can be contracted even with those who respect the same scriptures such as Jews, Christians and Parsees.

The Procedure of Muslim Marriage

The proposal of marriage among the Muslims is made only when both the parties have enquired about one another and satisfied themselves. The proposal of marriage should be made and accepted in the same meeting. When both the parties have settled about the economic aspects of marriage, they decide on some date to perform the marriage ceremony. On this date the bride-groom offers the settled 'Mehtar' to the bride's party. The consent of both the bride and the bride-groom is necessary to make a marital contract valid. From the side of the bride some other person may also disclose her consent. Some adult person must be a witness to the contract of marriage. This witness, who is a relative of the bride's party, goes to the bride and asks her whether she gives him the right to settle her marriage with the man who is offering her 'Mehtar'. He also narrates the complete description of the proposed bride-groom. If the bride gives her consent, the bride-groom and the witness are presented before the priest. When the bride-groom gives his sanction the witness tells the priest that he is the representative for the bride. The priest determines from the witness whether the bride has consented to marry the bride-groom after the Mehtar has been paid. When both the parties agree to the contract of marriage, the priest recites certain Kalma and the marriage is considered to be finalised.

Types of Muslim Marriage

According to Muslim Marriage Rules, the marriages are classified into the following three types :

(1) *Valid contract* : Such a marriage is contracted by following all prescribed rules and the birth of offspring from it is considered to be legitimate.

(2) *Void marriages* : A marriage whose basis is not legal is called a void marriage. It does not create any responsibilities or legitimacy in the marriage contract.

(3) *Irregular Marriages* : A marriage becomes irregular whose basis is sound but in which some formality has been left unfulfilled. If this formality is fulfilled after the marriage it becomes regular. For example, the marriage with a fifth woman can be regularised by divorcing one of the former four wives, the marriage among the minors can be regularised by getting the permission of their guardians and the marriage without witness can be regularised by making some one a witness to it even after marriage.

Muta Marriage

The Sunnis among Muslims admit only a permanent form of marriage but Shias accept a temporary marriage known as "Muta". This type of marriage is contracted on two conditions : firstly, the settlement of the period of marriage which may range from one day to several years, and secondly, the settlement about the amount of "Mehtar". Of the two conditions the former is more important. The Muta marriage is valid if its period has been fixed even if no settlement about Mehtar has been made. On the other hand, if Mehtar has been settled, while the period of its duration has not been fixed, the marriage remains illegitimate. Both the male and the female have a right to enter into Muta marriage. The woman cannot marry any non-Muslim while the Muslim male can marry a Christian, a Jew or a Parsee woman. No one, however, has been permitted to contract this temporary sort of marriage with a follower of any other religion. Muta marriage differs from the permanent type of marriage on the following grounds :

(1) *Succession* : The right of succession is secured only in a permanent type of marriage and not in Muta marriage. The sons born through Muta marriage, however, are given a right to inherit the property of both the parents.

(2) *Dissolution of marriage*: A permanent Muslim marriage can be dissolved only through divorce. In Muta marriage the wife has no right to dissolve the marriage before the specified time limit while the husband can dissolve it whenever he wishes to do so. The Sunnis do not accept Muta marriage. In the actual practice it is very rare amongst Shias as well.

Option of Puberty

An important principle observed in Muslim marriage is the option of puberty. In India, the age of puberty is considered to be 15 in the case of males and 13 or 14 in the case of females when menstruation begins. The Privy Council had decided the age of puberty to be 9 years for Shia girls. According to Hidaya, a Muslim scripture, the age of puberty is 12 and 9 in the case of boys and girls respectively. Before the age of puberty a boy and a girl are considered to be minors and sanction of their guardians is considered to be necessary for a valid marriage. But in the case of such a marriage, the bride and the bride-groom can reject the contract after attaining the age of puberty. This option of rejecting the marital contract performed at the minor age is called the option of puberty in Muslim marriage law. According to it, if either the male or the female refuses to accept the marital contract after attaining the age of puberty, it is considered as if the marriage never took place.

Responsibilities and Rights of a Married Woman

The Muslim marriage imposes the following responsibilities on the woman :

1. To maintain proper marital relationship with the husband.
2. Following the commands of the husband.
3. Providing sexual enjoyment to the husband, keeping in view the principles of health and propriety
4. To feed the child in the absence of any other to do so.
5. Following the principle of "Iddat" according to which the wife is not permitted to remarry for a certain period during which she must remain a celibate. This decides the paternity of the child in case the woman has any conception.

The Muslim marriage gives the following rights to the married woman :

1. The right to receive "Mehtar" from the husband.
2. The right to reside in the house of the husband.
3. The right to receive maintenance from the husband.
4. The right to receive equal love from the husband in case of the presence of other co-wives.
5. The right of bringing up her children.

It is clear from the above-mentioned rights of a married Muslim woman that she has not been given equality with the husband in this respect. While the husband has a right to marry several women at the same time, the wife can marry only one man. While it is very easy for the husband to divorce the wife, it is very difficult for the wife to do so. In the case of adultery the husband can inflict severe punishment on the wife but the wife can only divorce her husband. The married woman has to constantly live under veil in order to avoid other's sight. She is not given equal rights in the property of the husband.

"Mehtar" or "Dowry"

As has already been pointed out, the Muslim married woman has a right to receive 'Mehtar' from the husband. According to Muslim law, marriage is a civil contract and "Mehtar" or dower is its necessary consequence. It is received by the woman in exchange for her consent to be his wife. It is not bride price, but shows respect towards the wife. The dower has been classified as follows :

1. *Settled or definite dower* : This is the dower which has been settled prior to marriage or on the occasion of it. It may vary from a few coins to several thousands of rupees. It is settled by the mutual consent of both the parties of the bride and the bride-groom.
2. *Mehtar-ul-Misl* : This is the dower which is not decided at the time of marriage, but after, at the instance of the wife.
3. *Muwajjal Mehtar* : This is the "Mehtar" given by the husband to the wife immediately after marriage.
4. *Mehtar after dissolution of marriage* : This is the Mehtar paid after dissolution of marriage either because of the breaking

of the marital contract or by the death of either spouse or in the case of divorce.

Muslim Law of Divorce

Among Muslims the Law of Divorce is very rigid so far as the woman is concerned but it is easier for the male to divorce his wife. The divorce has been classified into oral and written. The written divorce is called the "Talaqnama". The oral divorce has been classified into the following types :

1. *Talaq-e-Ahsan* : In this type of divorce if the husband pronounces the word "talaq" once, the wife does not resume sexual relationship with him for a certain specified period which is normally three months. After this period divorce is accepted.

2. *Talaq-e-Hasan* : In this type of divorce the husband pronounces the word "talaq" three times during the period of two menstruations and after the period of third menstruation he does not enter into any sexual relationship with the wife. After this period divorce is accepted as valid.

3. *Talaq-ul-widdat* : In this type of divorce the husband pronounces the word "talaq" three times during the period of one menstruation. This divorce is irregular and it is regularised only after the completion of the time limit.

Formerly, the Muslim woman had no right to divorce her husband. With the enactment of the Dissolution of Muslim Marriage Act, 1939 she has a right to divorce her husband under the following circumstances :

1. If the husband disappears and cannot be traced anywhere for four years.

2. If the husband is unable to meet the expenses of the wife for at least two years.

3. If the husband gets the punishment of imprisonment for seven years or more.

4. If the husband is unable to enter into sexual relationship with or without a reasonable cause.

5. If the husband is impotent.

6. If the husband is mad.

7. If the husband behaves cruelly with the wife.

8. If the husband is insane or suffering from leprosy or virulent venereal diseases for two successive years.

The following are the other methods of the dissolution of a Muslim marriage :

1. *Jihar* : In this the husband compares his wife with some near relative whom he cannot marry. For example, if the husband compares his wife with his mother, he cannot enter into sexual relationship with her unless he repents for this comparison and, if he fails to do so, the wife can divorce him.

2. *Ila* : In this the husband, swearing by God, promises not to enter into sexual relationship with the wife for four months or more. Now, if the husband follows his promise for the specified period, the marriage is considered to be dissolved. This type of dissolution of marriage is no more prevalent in Muslim Society.

3. *Liyan* : If a husband brings forth a false charge of adultery against the wife, the wife prays to the court that the husband be ordered to take back his charge. And if the husband fails to do so the marriage is dissolved. If the husband and wife both accuse each other of adultery, their marriage is considered to be dissolved.

4. *Khula* : In this the wife asks her husband to set her free from the bonds of marriage in exchange of some amount of money from her. If the husband accepts his wife's request, the marriage is dissolved by mutual consent.

5. *Mubar-at* : This type of dissolution of marriage also occurs by mutual consent, but in it the wife has not to pay any money to the husband.

In spite of the enactment of the Dissolution of Muslim Marriages Act, 1939, there is much inequality in this respect between the Muslim wife and husband. It is only when this inequality is removed that the Muslim woman can attain equal status with her husband in society.

Comparison of Hindu and Muslim Marriage Systems

The following are the similarities among Hindu and Muslim marriage systems :

1. *Permission of polygamy to males* : The scriptures of both

the Hindus and the Muslims allow the male to marry several times, though among the Muslims this concession is more liberal. According to Hindu scriptures, a man can marry a second time with the consent of his wife for getting a male progeny. But among the Muslims no particular cause for marriage or consent of wife is required in the case of four marriages at the same time and the fifth marriage can be always regularised by simply divorcing either of the former four wives. The Hindu scriptures do not permit such polygamy without restriction. According to *Apastamb Dharma sutra*, a male guilty of deserting his wife without any reason should be made to wear the skin of a donkey for six months. But in practice in medieval times there were hardly any restrictions on polygamy among Hindus so much so that some used to marry dozens of women at the same time. In the case of "Kulin" marriage in Bengal the Kulin Brahmins used to marry sometimes over 100 women, noted their addresses in their diaries and used to visit them at their father's place once or twice in a year. At present the Hindu Marriage Act has put an end to the custom of polygamy among the Hindus but no such law has been formulated for Indian Muslims.

2. *Custom of child marriage* : The evil of child marriage has been prevalent in India both among Hindu and Muslim communities. The option of puberty among the Muslims provides the adult male and female to reject child marriage and to marry again. The Hindu Marriage Act has specified the minimum age for marriage in the case of boys and girls and thus declared child marriage to be illegal.

The following are the important differences found between Hindu and Muslim marriage systems :

1. *Aims of marriage* : The aims of marriage among Hindus have been specified as Dharma, Kama and the birth of a son. Among the Muslims the marital contract is made for the satisfaction of sexual urges and procreation.

2. *Basis of marriage* : While Hindu marriage is a religious sacrament, the Muslim marriage is a civil contract. To quote K. M. Kapadia, "Hindu marriage is a sacrament. It is considered sacred because it is said to be complete only on the performance

of the sacred rites accompanied by the sacred formula."

3. *Field of exogamy*: Among Muslims the law of exogamy is applicable only to very near relatives who include some nine relations. They have no restriction of *Gotra* and *Pravara*. Among Hindus marriages cannot be contracted among seven generations on the paternal side and five generations on the maternal side. In 1911, Blunt concluded, from the Census Report of U.P., that due to restriction of marriage among *Sapinda* relatives the scope of getting a match is considerably limited and the number of relatives who cannot be married reaches four figures. Besides, there is a restriction of *Sagotra* and *Saprarav* marriages among Hindus. Inter-caste marriage is also forbidden while the number of castes reaches several thousand. Thus the field of getting a match for matrimonial purposes becomes very much limited in Hindu community as compared with the Muslims.

4. *Distinction in dowry and mehar*: Among Hindus there is the custom of dowry which is very much different from the custom of Mehar found among the Muslims. While dowry is given from the bride's party to the bride-groom and the bride has no right in it, Mehar is given from the bride-groom to the bride's party and the bride has the sole right over it. While dowry is given only on the occasion of marriage, Mehar can be given even after the marriage has been solemnized. And normally it is only settled on the occasion of marriage. But now-a-days, the demand for dowry and Mehar is increasing beyond limits so that both in the Hindu and Muslim communities reformers are trying to eliminate this custom.

5. *Provision of temporary marriage*: While there is no provision of a temporary marriage among Hindus, in Shia Muslims there is provision for a temporary marriage known as "Muta."

6. *Rules about widow remarriage*: Formerly, there was no provision for widow remarriage in Hindu society and even now when it is legally accepted, in practice no one likes to marry a widow. Among the Muslims, on the other hand, widow remarriage is a normal feature. In the case of widow remarriage among Hindus there is no provision like the rule of Iddat as found among the Muslims.

Comparison of the Status of Women in Hindu and Muslim Society

The comparison of the status of women in Hindu and Muslim society requires a study of the rights and duties of the married women in both the communities. The following are the important points in this respect :

1. *Custom of veil* : Among Muslims the custom of veil is a religious principle. The Quran commands the women to remain in veil so that they may maintain their purity. This veil has very much lowered the status of Muslim women, it is a symbol of man's lack of confidence in them. It severs their connection with the outer world and restricts their freedom. It has an adverse effect on their health and is an impediment in their education. Because of the religious sanction behind it this custom cannot be easily eliminated from the Muslim community. In the medieval times the Hindu women also began to observe veil due to the influence of the Muslims and also to save themselves from the Muslims. But in the modern times the Hindu women easily cast off the veil and they had not to struggle for it.

2. *Women's education* : Women's education is far more prevalent in Hindu community as compared with the Muslims. Consequently, the status of women in Muslim society is much lower as compared with that in Hindu community.

3. *Polygamy* : Though polygamy was formerly prevalent among Hindus also, the Hindu Marriage Act has declared it to be illegal. There is, however, no such provision for the Muslims. Islam considers four wives to be valid and only marriage with a fifth woman is considered to be irregular. On the other hand, while Polyandry is Prevalent among some classes of Hindus, it is not found among the Muslims.

4. *Dowry or Mehar* : While the custom of dowry considerably lowers the status of women in Hindu society, the rule of Mehar enhances the status of Muslim women. At present, however, the form of both dowry and Mehar has been so much distorted that the reformers in both the communities are seeking to eliminate it.

5. *Divorce* : Before the enactment of the Hindu Marriage Act in 1955, the Hindu women had no right to divorce. The Muslim women had already received this right with the Dissolution of the

Muslim Marriage Act in 1939. At present, however, both Hindu and Muslim women enjoy a right to divorce but while the conditions of divorce in Hindu community are equal for the wife and husband, among the Muslims it is easier for the husband to divorce the wife. This inequality with regard to the right to divorce has lowered the status of women in Muslim society.

6. *Punishment for adultery* : While among the Hindus the husband can leave his wife in case of adultery, among the Muslims in some countries the husband has a right to kill his wife as well as her lover. According to the prescription of Abdullah Ekandi, the property of the deceased woman will be received by her husband. Though Quran does not provide for a very severe punishment to the wife in the case of adultery, Hazrat Mohammad has prescribed the punishment of one hundred canes for her. On the other hand, if the charge of adultery on the wife is found to be false, the husband will be given a punishment of 80 canes.

7. *Sanction to widow remarriage* : Among Muslims widow remarriage is a normal feature though the widow cannot remarry immediately after the death of her husband and has to wait for at least three months. Formerly, there was no provision for widow remarriage in Hindu society, but now they have been legally permitted to do so.

8. *Right of inheritance* : Among Muslims the daughter gets a share in the father's property equal to half of the share of the son. The widow gets one half of the husband's property and one fourth if she is without any issue. Thus the Muslim woman has not been given equal rights with the males in matters of succession. Formerly, the Hindu women had no right to succession and property, but with the enactment of Hindu Succession Act, 1956, the daughter gets an equal right to succession and property along with the son. This provision has improved the status of women in Hindu society as compared to that in Muslim community.

The above discussion regarding the status of women among Hindus and Muslims makes it clear that however backward may have been the status of Hindu women earlier, their present condition is far better than that of their Muslim sisters. An important reason for this difference is the religious dogmatism and an op-

position to all types of social reforms in Muslim community. The influence of Western culture is, however, gradually awakening Muslim women and they are demanding equal rights with men in different spheres of life. It may be that in future they may get equal rights with males, as their sisters are enjoying in Hindu community.

Chapter IV

TRIBAL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

According to Dr. Rivers the tribe is a simple social group the members of which use a common dialect and work together in war and in carrying out other common projects. In this definition of a tribe, Rivers has not held common residence at one location to be an essential characteristic since most tribes are of the nature of wanderers. But in spite of the habit of wandering, tribes do possess a definite habitation. In this definition Rivers has stressed the unity of tribes in times of war. On the other hand, there are many tribes within which one faction clashes with another. In the same way many tribes have neither any leader nor any central or any other kind of rule or administration. According to the *Imperial Gazetteer*, "A tribe is a collection of families bearing a common name, speaking a common dialect, occupying or professing to occupy a common territory and is not usually endogamous though originally it might have been so." In defining the tribe Dr. D. N. Majumdar has only clarified this description. According to him, "A tribe is a collection of families, bearing a common name, members of which occupy the same territory, speak the same language and observe certain taboos regarding marriage, profession or occupation and have developed a well assessed system of reciprocity and mutuality of obligation."

Characteristics of the Tribe

The following characteristics of the tribe are evident from its various definitions :

1. The tribe inhabits and remains within a definite and common topography. In the absence of a common topography the tribe

would also lose its other characteristic features as community sentiments, common language, etc. For this reason a common habitat is essential for a tribe.

2. But any group of people living in a particular geographical area cannot be called a tribe as long as its members do not possess a mutual sense of unity. This mental element is an invariable and essential characteristic of the tribe.

3. The members of a tribe speak a common language. This also helps to evolve a sense of communal unity among them.

4. The members of a tribe generally marry into their own tribe but now, due to increased contact with other tribes — the consequence of an increase in the means of transportation — the system of marrying in the tribe is also changing.

A major cause of the sense of communal unity in the tribe is the tie of blood relationships between its members. The members of a tribe believe in their having descended from a common, real or mythical ancestor and hence believe in blood relationships with the other members.

6. The members of a tribe always experience the need for protection. Keeping this need in view, the political organisation of the tribe is established and all authority for administration is vested in one person. This leader employs his mental power and skill in protecting the entire tribe. A tribal committee is formed to render assistance in the form of advice to the tribal chief. As a general rule the tribal chief accedes to the wishes of the committee. The tribe is divided into numerous small groups each of which has its own chief. These chiefs solve the problems of their own groups and act according to the directives of the tribe.

7. In this way each tribe has its own political organisation which maintains harmony and avoids notes of discord among its members and protects them.

8. Religion is of great importance in the tribe. The tribal political and social organisation is based on religion because social and political laws become inviolable once they are granted religious sanctity and recognition. The authority of a common religion is an important characteristic of a tribe.

9. The tribe has a common name.

10. A common culture, resulting from a sense of unity, common language, common religion, common political organisation, etc., is found to exist in a tribe.

11. A tribe is constituted of many clans. There exist laws of reciprocity among its members.

Tribe and Horde

A nomadic horde is a group of small number of people. When the members of the nomadic horde increase to a very sizable figure it is called a tribe. A very strong community feeling exists in both horde and tribe which differ from each other mainly in respect of size. In both, such economic activities as collection of fruits, animal hunting, animal husbandry, fishing, etc., are carried on. In both, a similarity of blood relations is to be found. In both, there is a conglomeration of families. The chief is well respected and obeyed in both. In spite of such similarities, the horde and the tribe differ from each other in the following respects :

1. In the tribal group, as against the horde, the need for protection stands out prominently.

2. The tribe is bigger in size than the nomadic horde.

3. In the tribe, religion is more developed than in the horde because in the latter a greater solidarity and strength of political and social laws is to be expected.

4. Being of a larger and more cumbersome size the tribe possesses a weaker sense of unity than does the horde.

5. The tribe is divided into many smaller groups but the horde has no such sub-divisions.

6. Agricultural occupation is an accepted means of livelihood in the tribe, whereas in the horde agriculture is not very extensive.

7. The tribe inhabits a definite place. Instead of staying at a definite place, the horde wanders over a definite geographical area.

Tribe and Caste

Marriage within the clan is forbidden both in the tribe as well

as in the caste. Both generally condemn marriage outside the group. The modern development in the means of transport and communications has induced increased contact between members of various tribes and castes and has weakened the laws of endogamy in both. The two do exhibit considerable similarity, yet they also differ in the following respects :

1. According to Risley, the convention of endogamy is not rigidly enforced in a tribe whereas such is the case in a caste. But this view of Risley does not appear to be universally true since the law of endogamy is enforced with extreme rigidity in some tribes.

2. Max Weber writes in *Social Structures* that when an Indian tribe loses its territorial significance, it assumes the form of an Indian caste. In this way, the tribe is a local group whereas the caste is a social group.

3. The caste was originated, in ancient Hindu society, with a view to division of labour on the basis of profession and occupations. The tribe came about because of the evolution of community feeling in a group inhabiting a definite geographical area.

4. According to Dr. D. N. Majumdar, the tribe looks upon Hindu ritualism as foreign and extra-religious, though it does indulge in it and in the worship of gods and goddesses whereas in the caste these form a necessary part of religion itself. The tribes of Madhya Bharat which are called Hindu and Kshatriya tribes are better acquainted with their own "Bonga" than with the Hindu gods.

5. According to Max Weber, the status of all people is similar in the caste, whereas there is much differentiation of status and rank in the tribe. This view of Max Weber does not apply to all castes. Differentiation of rank and status can be found in many castes also.

6. There is greater consciousness of such differences in status and rank in the caste than in the tribe.

7. The caste is never a political association whereas the tribe is a political association.

8. The names of clans in castes are adopted from some saint or mystical savant such as Vashishtha, Vishvamitra, Bharadwaja,

Kashyap, etc. In the tribe the clans are based on totem; for example, the clans in the Komti tribe of Mysore are named after all kinds of fruits, vegetables, spices, foodgrains, etc. The list presented by Thurston in *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, seems to indicate that hardly any name in the animal and vegetable world remains to be used as the basis for a totem name.

9. In the caste, individuals generally pursue their own definite occupations because a definite occupation is assigned to each caste under the caste system. In the tribe, individuals can indulge their fancies in whatever profession they please because there is no such definite assignment of occupations in a tribe.

Actually, the tribes are now gradually being converted into castes. Risley has mentioned four processes in this transformation : (1) By changing one's lineage. (2) By accepting the principles of any school of Hindu religion. (3) By joining Hindu religion. (4) By entering into relations with Hindus without changing name. According to D. N. Majumdar, a tribe can enter the Hindu society by adopting the clan and name of a caste. As a result of these changes, the difference between tribe and caste is being continually reduced.

The Clan

A tribal group is divided into clans. The clan or sib is an important part of the tribal organisation. It is only an extensive form of lineage constituted by blood relations. A clan is constituted by including all the relatives of either the mother's or the father's lineage and all the offsprings of and ancestors in such a lineage. In this way, many lineages constitute a clan. The clan emanates from some renowned real or imagined ancestor of the family. Being prominent and respected this ancestor is accepted as its founder. All the lineal descendents of the family are introduced by his name. A clan is never constituted by combining the lineages of both the mother and father. It is invariably unilateral. Its descendents are of either matrilineal or patrilineal lineage. Thus, in brief, a clan is that collection of unilateral families whose members believe themselves to be the common descendants of a real or mythical ancestor.

Characteristics of Clan

The following characteristics of the clan are evident from the above definition :

1. *Exogamous group* : The clan is an exogamous group since all the members of a clan believe themselves to be descendents of one ancestor. Consequently, they do not marry any member of their clan. Marriage is contracted only out of one's own clan.
2. *Common ancestor* : The organisation of the clan is based on the conception of a common ancestor. This ancestor can be real or mythical.
3. *Unilateral* : The nature of the clan is unilateral, viz., in one clan there is either the collection of all families on the mother's side or of all families on the father's side.

Types of Clan

According to its unilateral nature, clan may be of two types :

1. *Matrilineal clan* : In this all the offsprings of one woman are held to be members of one clan. At the same time, the sisters and brothers of the woman are also members of this clan. In this way a matrilineal clan includes the woman, her offspring, her sisters and their children. But it does not include the children of the brothers.
2. *Patrilineal clan* : In this clan are included the man, his children, his brothers and sisters and the children of the brothers but not of the sisters.

Clans have different names based on different grounds. The main grounds among them are the following :

1. After the names of saints, for example Shandilya, Bharadwaj, etc.
2. After the names of the totem such as Kunjam, Naagsori, etc.
3. On the basis of substitute names such as Kamaar, jagat, etc.
4. On the basis of some topography, for example Mahanadiya, Jaunpuriya, etc.

Functions of Clan

The main functions of the clan are as follows :

1. The members of a clan possess a "we feeling" because of

their belief in descent from a common ancestor. They are prepared not merely to assist one another but even to lay down their lives for each other. When one member of the clan is injured all the members share his pain. Two sayings are prevalent among them : (i) "Strike my clan brother and you strike me" and (ii) "The blood of the clan is my blood".

2. Individuals indulging in antisocial acts are extradited from the clan. In this way, the conduct of clan members is controlled. Extradition from the clan proves more effective and disastrous than even a death sentence for the erring member.

3. It is the universal legal function of the clan to punish miscreants and maintain peace and order in this matter.

4. With the help of the law of exogamy, the clan arranges marriage from outside the group. This on the one hand, avoids conflicts within the clan between men for a woman and, on the other, serves to increase cordiality and friendship with the members of other clans.

5. The clan performs all the administrative functions for its members. The heads of the various clans meet and form a committee for the tribes which serves to mediate in the conflicts between clan members and takes political decisions in war and peace.

6. In the villages where agriculture is carried on, it is the clan which arranges for agricultural land. The head of the clan distributes the land. When a person is deprived of the membership of the clan he is also deprived of this land. Members can only rent the land.

In addition to the above mentioned functions, the clan also caters to the religious preferences of its members. Generally, the head of clan is also its priest. It is he who consummates the religious undertakings of all the members.

Distinction between Clan and Caste

Clan and caste differ from each other in the following respects :

1. Clan is a well-organised group based on a mythical ancestor. Caste is a real, actual, organised group.

2. Clan is an exogamous and caste an endogamous group. Members of the clan marry outside the clan. Members of the caste

cannot marry outside the caste.

3. In the clan individuals possess the same status. In the caste individuals possess higher and lower social status.

Distinctions between Clan and Tribe

The clan and tribe are different and distinct from each other on the following counts :

1. Clan has no definite topographical area whereas members of a tribe generally live in a definite geographical location.

2. Clan has no definite language; the tribe has a common language.

3. Clan is an exogamous group. The members of a clan do not wed a member of their own clan. The tribe is commonly an endogamous group although, with increasing contact among neighbouring tribes consequent upon an increase in the means of transportation, the tribe has now lost some of its endogamous character.

Tribes in India

The Indian tribes constitute an important part of Indian society, though their social organization and social institutions are very much different from those of Hindus and Muslims. The Indian tribes have been divided into the following three classes :

1. *North-eastern aboriginals* : These tribes are found in Assam, Tripura and Manipur. Their number totals around two million. They belong to the Mongol race and their language resembles the languages of Austric family. The important tribes in this class are the Kukis, the Nagas and the Mikirs.

2. *Central aboriginals* : These tribes live in Vindhya-chal, Satpura, Kekar and Aravali mountains. The important among these are the Gonds of Madhya Pradesh, Bhils of Rajasthan, Santhals of Chota Nagpur, Ho of Singhbhum and Manbhum, Khond and Kharia of Orissa, Sawara of Ganjam and the Mundas. This class of Indian aboriginals includes their biggest number. The number of Santhals alone is more than two million. Most of these aboriginals carry out shifting cultivation. Some are engaged in small scale cottage industries. Some of these live in very dense forests and difficult

terrains of mountains. They lead a very primitive type of life away from the civilized world.

3. *The southern aboriginals* : These are the tribes of South India. The most ancient tribes in India are found in Kerala, of which the maximum number is that of Kadar. Other important tribes in this class are the Todas of the Nilgiris, Chenchu of Hyderabad and the Kanikar and Kurovan of Travancore-Cochin. In some of these tribes there is a matriarchal type of social organization and matrilineal type of family.

Besides the above mentioned main classes of Indian aboriginals, tribes are found in Andaman and Nicobar, Northern Himalayas, the districts of Chamba and Mahasu, Dehradun and Darjeeling. Some of the Indian tribes, such as, the Nagas, and the Santhals are absolutely isolated from civilization.

Matrilineal Societies among Indian Tribes

In contrast to the patrilineal society found in the civilized world, some tribes have matrilineal society which is recognised by the following characteristics :

1. *Succession through the mother* : While in the patrilineal society the succession follows through the father, in matrilineal society it follows through the mother. Since the members of the group receive their family name through the mother, the society is known as matrilineal.

2. *Succession of property to female* : Because in the matrilineal society the father resides with the mother, the succession of property is decided from the female side. Normally, the son of the brother or sister of the mother succeeds to her property. In the case of kingdom also similar rule is followed in matters of succession.

3. *Matrilocal family* : While in the patrilineal society the bride goes to the house of the bridegroom after marriage and resides there along with her children, in the matrilineal society the husband lives at the residence of the wife. Thus the family in such a society is matrilocal.

The example of matrilineal societies can be seen among the Garo and Khasi tribes of Assam in India. In Garo matrilineal society the succession is decided from the mother's side. It is be

lieved that a female was the original founder of this tribe. In matters of marriage the proposal is made from the woman's side but a man has the right to marry at least three women at the same time. There is no exchange of money at the time of marriage. The women succeed to the property and therefore a widow is not allowed to marry for a certain period after the death of her husband. The purpose of this delay in remarriage is to keep the property within the family and allow the minor sons to become adult. The male resides with the female after his marriage.

Among the Khasi matrilineal society of Assam the tradition begins with females or princesses. The creator God in their religion possesses characteristics of female. The mother has some rights over the family property and after her the right to property is given to her daughter. The male resides with his in-laws after marriage. The religious functions are in the hands of women, who serve as priests on religious occasions. This, however, does not mean that in these societies, the wife dominates the husband, because the word used for the husband in this society means "the master". Divorce is allowed only by mutual consent. And the male is given all the rights of the husband.

The Tribal Marriage: Ways of Acquiring a Mate

The institution of marriage among the tribals is different from that in the Hindu society. Marriage among the tribals is not a religious sacrament but a social contract with the purposes of enjoyment of sex, procreation and companionship. The forms of marriage, the ceremonies, the taboos and the laws of dissolution of marriage are different in the tribal world from civilized society.

Forms of Marriage

Normally the tribal male marries only one woman because he is not rich enough to maintain more than one wife and the number of males and females in a tribe is usually equal. The following are the important forms of getting a mate in tribal society :

1. *Marriage by purchase* : The most prevalent method of securing a bride in primitive societies is marriage by purchase. This is equivalent to Asur marriage described in Hindu scriptures.

According to Robert Lowie, however, the bride price is not paid as the price for the girl but symbolises her utility for the male and the compensation to the parents for giving away their daughter in marriage. Again, among some Indian tribes there is the custom of dowry, which finishes the value of bride price. This is particularly true about the Santhal, Ho, Oraon, Kharia, Gond, Naga, Kuki and Bhils among Indian tribes. Like Hindus, the problem of bride price is becoming complex in tribal society. In the Singbhum district the amount of bride price in the Ho tribe is so much that very few persons can pay it, with the result that other forms of marriage are preferred.

2. *Service marriage* : This is a special type of marriage by purchase. While in marriage by purchase the bridegroom gives some money or gift to his father-in-law, in service marriage he pays off for the marriage in terms of service rendered to his father-in-law. This custom is particularly found among those persons who are too poor to pay any money as bride price. In the Gond tribe the bridegroom, desirous of marrying through service, is known as Lamnai and in the Vega tribe as Lamsena. In Himachal Pradesh he is known as Kamaoos. In service marriage the youth has to serve his future father-in-law for three to five years. During this period if the father of the girl is satisfied with the youth, he gives his daughter in marriage to him. If, however, the father is dissatisfied he dismisses the youth and gives this chance to another person. During the course of service, the young man can meet the girl but cannot enter into sexual relationship with her.

3. *Marriage by capture* : An important method of securing a bride in Indian tribes is marriage by capture. This form of marriage is prevalent due to various causes. In the Ho tribe its cause is the excessive bride price. Another cause is the misbehaviour of the woman with her sister-in-law so that the sister-in-law is always waiting for some one to carry her by force. Though the relatives apparently try to take revenge for the capture of the girl, in 99% cases the capture is regularised by means of marriage in which the young man has only to apply vermilion on the forehead of the girl. The custom of marriage by capture is found among the Santhal, Munda, Bhumij, Gond, Bhil and the

Naga tribes. Among the Bhumij tribe, it is considered to be the best form of marriage, so much so that even after the settlement of marriage the parents of the girl request the bridegroom to run away with the bride. In the Kharia and Birhor tribes of Bihar, if a young man forcibly applies vermilion and oil on the forehead of a girl, she is declared his wife. Among the Nagas of Assam, a cause of marriage by capture is the dearth of women in their own tribe due to the evil custom of killing new born daughters. With the application of Indian Penal Code in Tribal circles, the custom of marriage by capture is gradually disappearing.

4. *Marriage by mutual consent and elopement*: An interesting form of securing a bride prevalent in Indian tribes is marriage by mutual consent and elopement. This was known as *Gandharva* marriage in the ancient Hindu scriptures. Among the Ho tribe of Bihar it is known as *Rajikbushi* marriage. In this form of marriage the girl elopes with a young man by her own consent and does not return to her parents till they give consent for the marriage. Naturally, no bride price is demanded in this type of marriage.

5. *Marriage by exchange*: In this type of marriage when a man's son is prepared to marry another's daughter, the latter's son accepts the former's daughter in marriage, thus an exchange of boys and girls is made between the two families.

6. *Probationary marriage*: This system of marriage is found in the Kuki tribe of Assam. In this system the bridegroom stays in the house of the girl for a certain period. If during this probation period they decide to marry, the marriage ceremony is solemnized; otherwise the young man leaves after paying some compensation to the parents of the girl.

7. *Anader or intrusion marriage*: This method of marriage is followed if all other valid sources of marriage have been closed so much so that even the parents of the girl fail to marry her with the desired boy. In this type of marriage the girl forcibly enters the house of her lover and does not leave it in spite of bearing all types of insults and cruelties. If she does not leave the house for a sufficient period, she is married to the young man. This custom of marriage is found among the Oraon, Ho and Birhor tribes.

8. *Marriage by test* : In this type of marriage the young man is allowed to marry the girl of his choice after he successfully passes the test for his bravery. A strange custom of this type of marriage is found among the Bhil tribe which is known as Gol Gadhedo. In it a social function is celebrated around a tree or a high pole at the top of which a coconut and some sweets are put. The boys and girls dance around this pole or tree, the girls remaining nearer the tree and the boys forming their circle outside the circle of the girls. Now a young man suddenly tries to break the circle of the girls and reaches the pole or tree, eats the sweets and breaks the coconut. The girls beat him and try to restrain him. If he comes out successful in his aim he is given a right to select any girl from the gathering as his wife.

Besides the above-mentioned methods of securing a bride found among the Indian tribes there are some other methods as well. Of these the following two are worth mentioning :

1. *Levirate* : In this type of marriage when a person dies, his younger brother marries his wife. This custom is found in the Santhal, Gond and Kharia tribes among others.

2. *Sorrorate* : In this type of marriage when the wife dies, the husband marries her unmarried sister. This type of marriage is found in Gond and Kharia tribes.

Ceremonies of Marriage

The celebration of marriage in a tribe is a social occasion for much festivity and rejoicing though the marriage ceremonies themselves are quite simple. In some tribes the mere application of vermilion on the forehead of the girl by the bridegroom is the sole ceremony of marriage. In some other tribes, the blood of the bride and the bridegroom are mixed as a token of their intimate union. In Gond tribe the procession of marriage starts from the bride's place instead of from the bridegroom's house. There are almost no religious *sanskaras* observed on the occasion of a tribal marriage, but generally there is provision for community songs and dances and feasts.

Types of Marriage : Polyandry

Marriage is normally of two types — monogamy and polygamy. Polygamy, again, has been classified into polygyny and polyandry. In polygyny a male marries several females. In polyandry, on the other hand, a female marries several males at the same time. The custom of polyandry is found among the Khasi tribe of district Dehradun, the Tiyan, the Kurumb, the Kot of Kerala and the Toda tribe of Nilgiri. Martin has mentioned its prevalence in the Oraon tribe and Maine has mentioned it in the case of the Santhals. This custom is also found among the Nayais of South India. It is also found in Laddakh, Kangra, Chamba, Kulu and Mandi.

The custom of polyandry has been divided into following two types :

1. *Adelphic or fraternal polyandry* : In this type of polyandry a woman marries all the brothers of her husband. Such is the custom found in the Khasi tribe of Dehradun district, which has been elaborately studied by D.N. Majumdar and R.N. Sexena. In this tribe, while the elder brother marries a woman, she is considered to be the wife of all his brothers. No younger brother is allowed to marry any other woman. If at the time of marriage any younger brother is a minor or he is born after marriage he is considered to be the husband of the woman after he becomes adult. But if a younger brother marries any other woman after being an adult the elder brother has an equal right over his wife also.

In the Khasi tribe though the woman is considered to be the wife of all brothers, the eldest brother has special rights over her. She cannot refuse to cohabit with him, and if she does, she can be divorced. If the eldest brother asks her not to cohabit with any other brother, she has to follow his command. If the other brothers quarrel over this issue only the elder brother has the right to allow for the dissolution of the marriage. If the woman has got any child prior to marriage, the eldest brother has the sole rights over the child.

In Khasi tribe, the paternity is decided by a social ceremony. According to Dr. Majumdar if there are three brothers in a family, the children will call them by the names of Bari Baba, Danger Baba and Bhedi Baba respectively. According to Frazer, the eldest brother

is considered to be father of the eldest son, the youngest brother that of the youngest son and so also in the case of other children.

The eldest brother is the head of family. He has sole right on the house, fields, gardens, cattle, grain, etc. He is the highest authority concerning the matters of women and children. In the case of division of property, he is given the biggest share and the wife and children stay with him. The children, however, have a right in the property of all the fathers. In these people if it is desired to marry more than one woman, generally this other woman is the sister of the first wife. This is done to ensure the peace in the family. The Khasi tribe is patriarchal. The system of polyandry in it is consequently known as patriarchal polyandry.

2. *Non fraternal polyandry* : In this type of polyandry, as is clear by its name, the husbands of a woman need not have fraternal relationship among themselves. Thus the woman can also choose her husband from the males other than her husband's brothers. She successively lives in the houses of her different husbands, and while she is staying with some one, the other husbands have no rights over her. Non-fraternal polyandry is also known as matriarchal polyandry because in it the woman has all the rights of property. The example of non-fraternal polyandry in India can be found among the Nayars of Malabar. According to Aiyappan, this custom is also found in Iangu tribe. Among the Nayars the girl stays with her family even after marriage and visits her husband sometimes. Sometimes the man has no relation with the wife after a certain period and the girl maintains sex relationships with several boys while living with her parents. The husbands have no right over the children or the property of the wife.

The following are the important characteristics of polyandry found in Indian tribes :

1. A woman can marry more than one husband.
2. The several husbands of a woman may be brothers or may not be so.
3. Though every husband has got right over the woman, the eldest brother has the maximum rights.
4. If there are more than one woman in the family every brother

is free to enter into sexual relationships with any one of them.

5. The eldest brother or the first husband has maximum rights over the property and children.
6. In matrilineal families the woman herself selects the husbands and lives with them successively. But while she is living with one husband, the others have no right over her.
7. Both men and women have equal rights of dissolving the marriage through divorce.

The following are the two important causes of prevalence of polyandry :

1. *Poverty* : In Laddakh where the custom of polyandry is found, its cause is poverty. It is seen that when a person gathers sufficient amount of money, he prefers to marry a woman and live separately from his house. According to Sumner, in Tibet, where agricultural produce is insufficient, several males together keep a woman. According to Lowie among the Chinese, several males together use a woman and meet her demands. According to R.N. Saxena, the Jaunsari woman is herself anxious to have several husbands because a single person cannot earn sufficient money to meet her demands.

2. *Scarcity of women* : According to Westermarck an important cause of polyandry is the scarcity of women. For example, among the Todas of Nilgiri, the number of women is much less in comparison with that of men and therefore polyandry is the normal custom. Now, with the increase of the number of women due to legal check on murder of daughters, the custom of polyandry is gradually diminishing. This reason advanced by Westermarck may be true in some cases. But, as has been rightly shown by Robert Briffalt, polyandry can be prevalent even where there is no scarcity of women. For example, there is no appreciable difference in the number of males and females in Lahaul, Sikkim, Tibet and Laddakh and yet the custom of polyandry is prevalent there. It can be, however, safely admitted that scarcity of women though not the sole cause of polyandry, is an important cause of it.

The custom of polyandry is very much defective and, therefore, it is gradually diminishing. The following are its important disadvantages :

1. It injures the health of women who develop many venereal diseases because of sexual intercourse with several males.
2. According to some thinkers this custom encourages barrenness among women.
3. In the long run polyandry leads to population problems.
4. According to some thinkers, in polyandrous marriages there is more likelihood of the birth of sons and, therefore, the cycle of polyandry never ends.
5. Polyandry increases the number of divorces.

Thus the custom of polyandry does not fulfil the psychological and spiritual requirements of a marital relationship. It is not even a sufficiently legal contract. It, however, cannot be eliminated without the elimination of poverty.

Polygyny Among Tribals

Polygyny is the custom of one male marrying several females. Due to several causes the custom of polygyny has very much diminished among tribes in modern times, though rich males even now marry several females. The custom of polygyny is found in Naga, Gond, Vaiga, Toda and other tribes of India. Its main causes are as follows :

1. In hills and plateaus one has to work very hard to earn his livelihood. The custom of polygyny provides free and reliable labourers to the husband. There is another economic cause of polygyny as well. The leaders of the tribes of Assam marry several females because they can afford to maintain them.

2. Among the tribes, because of the difficulty of the daily chores of life, the woman is sometimes herself anxious to have several co-wives to help her. Psychologically, this reason does not appear to be satisfactory.

3. Other important causes of polygyny are desire for children, increase in social prestige because of several wives and excessive lust of the male. Sometimes the scarcity of males is also a cause of polygyny.

The following are the so-called advantages of polygyny mentioned by its supporters.

1. Because only powerful and rich males marry several women,

therefore, it improves the new generation.

2. Polygyny restricts adultery because the males get sufficient sexual variety in their own family. This also helps in bringing up the children.

The above mentioned so-called advantages are nothing before the obvious disadvantages of polygyny of which the important ones are as follows :

1. In the presence of several wives the importance of each one of them diminishes in the family.
2. Due to the presence of several co-wives, the peace of the family is disturbed because of mutual jealousy and quarrels.
3. It is difficult for a man of ordinary status to meet the needs of several wives and, therefore, polygyny in such cases creates economic difficulties.
4. The greatest disadvantage of polygyny is that it is against the equality of sexes. Psychologically, it is against the establishment of conjugal love among wife and husband. The woman does not receive psychological satisfaction from such a marital relationship. Therefore, a majority of thinkers are against the custom of polygyny. With the spread of education among tribes, the custom is gradually disappearing.

Restrictions Concerning Marriage

In every tribal society there are certain restrictions connected with the institution of marriage. The important amongst these restrictions are exogamy and endogamy.

Exogamy : According to the rule of exogamy a man can marry only outside a certain group. This group may be his caste, tribe, clan or totem. Generally, the tribals are forbidden to marry within their clan and totem group. The custom of totem exogamy is also universal in Indian tribes. Among Khasi tribe clan exogamy is the custom. In some tribes one finds village exogamy in which marriage cannot be contracted within the village. An example is the Munda tribe of Chhota Nagpur. In south India the Erula tribe observes class exogamy. Similar is the custom among the Nagas of Assam.

Different scholars have advanced different reasons for the custom of exogamy. According to Risley the reason behind the custom of exogamy is the desire for novelty. Because of his desire for novelty the male does not want to marry any woman of his acquaintance within his group. Psychologically, novelty is a factor in marital relationship but it cannot be said that novelty cannot be secured in one's own group. According to Westermarck the main cause of exogamy is the prohibition of incest. This is definitely an important factor in exogamy. According to Audrey Richards, the cause of exogamy is the scarcity of women because of the evil custom of killing daughters. It is because of scarcity of women in the group that most of the males are compelled to find their mate from some other group. This is an important cause of exogamy. But the most important causes of exogamy are the prohibitions concerning totem and clan. The members of a totem and clan are considered to have blood relationships. The custom of totem and clan exogamy is, therefore, quite understandable.

Endogamy : Thus, in contrast to exogamy, in endogamy a man has to seek his mate within his own group. This group may be his caste, tribe, clan, etc. Endogamy is prevalent among the different classes of Bhil and Toda tribes. The following are the important causes of endogamy :

1. The most important cause of endogamy is the primitive man's natural fear of strangers. They think that the stranger may harm them by means of magic and, therefore, they prefer to marry within their own group. This is the cause of endogamy in the Korawa tribe.

2. The racial and geographical differences create a gulf among different tribes so that they fear each other and do not enter into marital relationships.

3. Different tribes have a natural desire to protect their cultural, linguistic and other specialities. This is possible only in the custom of endogamy.

4. Among other important causes of endogamy are absence of sufficient means of transport and communication, illiteracy, self-sufficient nature of tribe etc.

Divorce Among Tribes

There are no strict rules concerning divorce among tribes. Marriage is nothing more than a social contract and most of the males marry to fulfil the desire for children and the satisfaction of sex. There are different rules of divorce observed in different tribes. Among the Korawa tribe of Mirzapur the procedure is very simple. When a dissatisfied husband asks his wife to leave him and refuses to maintain her, she leaves him and goes to her father. She is now considered to be divorced and can marry again. In this tribe the divorced women are very much respected. The woman divorced seven times is the leader in religious and social functions. Among Bhils, the husband desirous of divorcing his wife, calls the village Panchayat and publicly gives her a piece of cloth from his turban declarnig that he is deserting her and henceforward treat her as his sister. The woman hangs this cloth from the roof of her father's house, where it remains hanging for a month. It signifies that her husband has no more rights over her and she can now marry again.

Among Gonds if a woman divorces her husband without his consent her second husband has to pay compensation to the former. Among the Muria tribe the divorce is never considered to be valid unless the amount of compensation is paid to the former husband. This amount is decided by the tribal panchayat. In the Lushai tribe of Assam, when the husband divorces his wife, he has to pay off the remaining bride price to the bride's party. But if the woman is guilty of adultery or, she herself deserts her husband, she has to return the bride price paid by the husband.

The causes of divorce are not similar in different tribes. Among Gonds divorce can be secured in the circumstances of the indifference of wife towards household affairs, her barrenness, her quarrelsome nature, breaking of the marital bond, etc. In the Kharia tribe a woman can be divorced on the grounds of barrenness, adultery, refusal to live with the husband and even laziness. Among tribals both male and female have a right to divorce. The customs concerning divorce, however, are changing because of the influence of Hindu and Christian cultures on tribal people these days.

Youth Dormitory

The most important social institution in the tribal social organization is the youth dormitory. This institution is found in almost every tribe and the social life is centred around it. It is known by different names in different tribes; for example, among the Nagas of Assam, it is called *Morung* while the female youth organization is called *Yo*, among Angami Nagas, it is called *Kinchuki*. In Uttar Pradesh, it is known as *Rangbang*, while among the Munda and Ho tribes of Madhya Bharat, it is called *Gitiora*. The Oraons call it *Dhoomkuriya*, the Bhuiyan call it *Dhangarbassa* and the Gonds call it *Gotul*.

These youth dormitories are housed in big buildings made of straw and thatch. There are separate houses meant for boys and girls. All the youths of the tribe pass their night in the dormitory. The boys and girls sleep separately. In the villages where there is no dormitory for the girls, they sleep in the house of some old woman. Such is the custom in the Munda tribe. In Bastar, the boys and girls of the age of 15 and 16 sleep in the dormitories. The Oraon youth has to pass his nights in the Dhoomkuria situated outside the village. Among the Ho tribe the unmarried boys and girls live in separate dormitories. Among the Lhota Nagas of Assam the boys can get leave from the Morung only in the case of serious illness of their mothers. Among the Miami tribals of Assam both boys and girls sleep in the same dormitory. While the girls sleep on the ground floor, the boys sleep on the first floor. Similar is the custom in the Muria tribe of Bastar. Their dormitories are situated outside the village. The unmarried boys and girls gather here at night, sing and dance and participate in other social activities before retiring.

The following are the important characteristics of the tribal youth dormitory :

1. While at some places there are separate dormitories for boys and girls, in other tribes they live in a common dormitory. This is the custom in the Muria tribe. On the other hand, among Konayak Nagas of Assam, the boys live in the Morung and the girls sleep in the Yo.

2. Normally the dormitories are situated outside the village in the forest, but they may also be near the fields as it is in the

case of dormitories of the Nagas. Among Oraon tribe the dormitory is situated in the centre of the village.

3. The life in the dormitory is based on certain traditions and customs which are invariably followed by the members.

4. The age of membership of the dormitory differs from tribe to tribe. As a general rule it is four or five years in most of the tribes.

5. The boys and girls live in the dormitory till they are married when their membership ceases automatically.

6. If a girl becomes a widow she can again enter the dormitory as its member.

7. In the evening the members of the dormitory gather after taking their meals at their homes. At the dormitory they make a fire, sit around it, tell stories, sing, dance and play and finally sleep.

8. The members of the dormitory are divided into two classes according to age — seniors and juniors. The head of the dormitory is selected from the senior group. It is his job to take care of all the members of the dormitory and maintain discipline among them. The juniors follow the commands of the seniors and receive different types of training from them.

9. It is the duty of every member of the dormitory to keep everything secret about it.

10. The members of the dormitory perform several functions together, e.g., construction of a house on the occasion of marriage or helping the village folk in harvesting the crop, etc.

The Gotul of Muria and Gond

Among the dormitories of Indian tribes, the Gotul of the Muria and Gonds of Madhya Bharat is worth mentioning. It is raised on bamboo poles with roofs of straw. There are no doors or windows in it. The members enter through a small hole sufficient to permit entry. All the unmarried boys and girls gather here in the evening, make a fire, sing and dance, tell traditional legends and sleep at night. The juniors serve the seniors and receive different types of training from them. Among the members of the Gotul, different boys and girls are given different status and corresponding

roles. The head of the dormitory is known as Challan or Silledar. Under him there are Dewan, Tehsildar, Subedar, Kotwal, etc. Similar positions are also given to the girls. According to Majumdar, the purpose of the Gotul is to save the village folk from the attack of wild animals. The young remain awake for most of night and sleep only in its last lap or in the day. They help their parents on the field or in grazing the cattle in the forest. In the evening they go to Gotul after taking their meals. Among the Muria tribals, the girls massage the bodies of the boys. Verrier Elvin has described the sexual life in the Gotul in detail in his book, *The Muria and their Gotul*. He has pointed out that the senior girls train the junior boys in matters of sex. In *The Gondwana and the Gonds*, Inderjit Singh has denied any type of sexual activity in the Gotul. D.N. Majumdar and Hutton also agree with Singh. In fact Elvin has himself admitted and wondered how there is hardly any case of conception among the members of the Gotul. According to Majumdar and Hutton, the Gotuls are the centres of social education. In it are shown the dances imitating agriculture, hunting, gathering of honey and economic activities carried out by the village folk. The concepts of crime and punishment and good and bad actions are taught through different stories.

Scholars do not agree about the origin of tribal dormitory. According to one view, they are residues of the ancient communal houses when the whole village used to live under one roof and there were no individual homes. According to another view, the purpose of the dormitory is to keep boys and girls unaware of the sexual relationship of their parents. According to Majumdar, the purpose of dormitory is to gather the youths of the village at one place to save the village from the attack of wild animals and the village maidens from the attack of males of other tribes. Besides this, the origin of the dormitory may be due to want of houses, the bliss of communal life and the development of tribal culture. Whatever may be the origin of the dormitory system, it is undeniable that it is the centre of tribal culture in a tribe. In it are taught the lessons of the traditions, norms, ideals, religious beliefs, methods of earning livelihood and discipline to the boys and girls.

of the tribe. According to S.C. Roy the tribal dormitory carries out the following three functions :

1. Helping in the gathering of edible things and consolidating economic organization.
2. Educating boys and girls in social and other duties and imparting them education in the matters of sex.
3. Following the principle of endogamy and keeping the movement of women limited and controlled.

Weakening of Dormitories

At present, unfortunately, the institution of dormitory is gradually weakening among the tribes. The two important causes of this development are as follows :

1. Due to the contact with urban people the tribals are gradually forgetting their social ideals and institutions and following urban culture. As the education is now being provided by the schools, the children do not go to the dormitory to receive education.
2. The spread of Christianity among tribals and the presence of the Christian missionaries among them have adversely affected their youth cultural set up. The institution of youth organization is gradually weakening, which has led to social disorganization among the tribes.

In fact, as has been rightly pointed out by Elwin, the condition of the social organization of a tribal group can be rightly estimated from the condition of its youth dormitory which is the centre of the maintenance and development of tribal culture.

Tribal Religion in India

Tribal religion is the most primitive form of religion found in human society. The following are the important characteristics of the Indian tribal religion :

1. *Faith in Mana* : Defining faith in Mana found in tribal society, Codrington has pointed out that Mana is "a force altogether distinct from physical power, which acts in all kinds of ways for good and evil, and which is of the greatest advantage to possess

or control." Thus, Mana is a supernatural power which is useful to man in the control of many natural phenomena beyond his power. According to Majumdar and Madan, "Entire religious life of the primitives is born out of their belief in certain understandable, impersonal, non-material and unindividualized supernatural power which takes abode in all the objects, animate and inanimate, that exist in the world."² According to Max Muller, Mana is an attempt to define certain natural phenomena in terms of an impersonal power. The high mountain, the river, the thunder and all other natural phenomena, according to the tribal people, act with the power of Mana. This power acts both for good and for bad. It is connected with the soul, ghost of the departed man and the living being. The Ho and Munda tribes of Chhota Nagpur call it Bonga.

2. *The Concept of Bonga* : According to these tribes, Bonga is a mysterious and impersonal power that causes rains, tempests, cold, floods, epidemics and the ferocity of wild animals. Everywhere activity is due to the power of Bonga. Thus, Bonga is a form of Mana.

3. *Animism* : Another important characteristic of Indian tribal religion is animism. According to Risley, tribal religion is animism. The tribal people believe in the presence of supernatural powers at the back of high mountains, flooded rivers, big trees and epidemics. They try to please these powers by means of different types of propitiations and worships. Sometimes, they are worshipped even without being given any name. An important type of animism is ancestor worship which is found among the Santhals and Oraons. The Santhals worship deities of family and village deities. Among the Korawa tribe, there is a goddess of crops, one of animals and a deity presiding over the rains. The tribal people try to please these gods and goddesses by offering sacrifices of different types of animals and birds for them.

The principle of animism is based on the following two beliefs :

1. There are powerful souls besides powerful gods. The souls are connected with men, and feel pleasure and pain through them. They influence the events in this world and also

control them.

2. The soul of man survives even after his death. The word "animism" was used for the first time by E. B. Taylor in anthropological literature. Animism, according to Taylor, is "the ground-work of the philosophy of religion from that of savage upto that of civilized man."³

4. *Animatism* : According to animatism there is some impersonal power behind every material object besides the living beings. Thus, in the tribal religions is found faith in the presence of supernatural power in bones, feathers, etc. This impersonal power is worshipped to maintain peace and prosperity in the group. It is difficult to distinguish between animatism and animism. The following distinctions, however, have been pointed out between the two. While according to animatism there is some mysterious, unknown, impersonal power at the back of all living beings and things, according to animism there is animal spirit found in all movable and immovable things. An example of animatism is found in the tribes of Bihar. They consider the bones, beads, stones and feathers to have living and magical powers. The stones are considered to be the children of mother earth and worshipped. The tribal people worship only those powers which can do some harm to them, but sometimes such powers are also worshipped which cannot do any harm, for example, the Singh Bonga of the Munda tribe. Though it is difficult to say as to which type of nature worship is found in a particular tribe in India, generally one finds animism as well as animatism in most of the tribes. From the comparative point of view, however, animatism is more widespread than animism.

5. *Naturalism* : A universal characteristic of tribal religion is naturalism or nature worship. The Garo tribe of Assam worships sun and moon. The Munda people worship sun god. Besides, other tribes worship rivers, mountains, stars, trees and other natural objects.

6. *Faith in the immortality of soul* : Among many tribes there is a custom of observing funeral rites twice. This is because of their faith in the immortality of the soul. Sometimes the second rite is considered to be more important than the first. The tribals

believe that the soul is not destroyed on the death of the body and requires food, etc., for a sufficiently long time. Among the Nagas and the tribals of the Nicobar island, the skull of the dead man is placed on a wooden statue believing the soul of the dead man will pass from the skull to the statue. Now the statue is served like a living human being and efforts are made to fulfil all its needs. Sometimes the statue is made of brass. Such is the custom among the Garo tribe of Assam. In Kerala in south India, the statue of a dead person is worshipped at least once a year. The tribals believe that the soul matter can increase the fertility of land and produce life. In the Naga tribe there is a custom of worshipping souls of the ancestors at the time of sowing and in the need of rains.

7. *Faith in rebirth* : Most of the Indian tribes believe that after death the soul of a man survives the body and enters into the body of some other animal, bird, or living being. Among the Bhils efforts are made to find out as to which body will be entered into by a particular soul. Similar beliefs are found among Nagas of Assam, Ahirs of Bengal, Kamar and Gond tribes.

8. *Faith in magic* : The most important characteristic of tribal religion is faith in magic. According to M. F. Kessing, "In its technical sense, magic is a term which summarises a variety of methods by which man purports to influence automatically the course of events by that touch of the supernatural. A magical act is a rite carried out to twist Nature in a specific way to satisfy human desire."⁴ Different types of magical acts are prevalent among different tribes. The tribals believe in magicians and witches. If a woman is declared a witch by the village magician she has to undergo all types of torture. A strange type of magical act is found among the Bhils to neutralize the effect of an epidemic. In the event of the spread of the epidemic, some people hang some pitchers and baskets on a bamboo pole and run on the main street crying "Toraka, Toraka". On hearing them, other people of the village help them in carrying this load out of the village. The load is carried to the nearest river or jungle and dumped. The people come to believe that the epidemic has been thrown out of the village in the river or in the forest.

9. *Totem and Taboo* : The custom of totem is an important characteristic of tribal religion. Different Indian tribes believe in different types of totems.

Totem is the object or animal who is supposed to have mystic relationship with the members of a tribe. The members of the tribe very much respect their totem. The animal symbolising the totem cannot be killed or eaten except on certain special occasions. Thus taboos are linked with totems. In the list of totems of different tribes in India one finds the names of almost all animals and vegetables. Defining totem, E. A. Hoebel has written : "Totem is an object, often an animal or a plant, held in special regard by the members of a social group, who feel that there is a peculiar bond of emotional identity between themselves and the totem." Thus totem is the object, plant or animal with which a particular social group feels supernatural relation and has faith in it which fosters the consciousness of unity among the members of a tribe. The following are the important characteristics of totemism :

1. The totem is considered to be the originator of the tribe and all the members are related to it.
2. It is believed that there is some supernatural and mystic relationship among members of the same totem.
3. It is believed that the totem protects the social group in difficult times, warns the members about the future danger and also predicts about future happenings.
4. The skin of the totem is considered to be sacred and is worn on special occasions. The figure of the totem is tattooed on the body. Mourning is observed on the occasion of the death of a totem animal and a funeral takes place in all its details.
5. As the members of the totem group consider themselves to be having blood relationship, they strictly observe the rule of exogamy.
6. The killing, eating or burning of the object or animal of totem is strictly a taboo.

Totemism is the basis of the religious organization among tribals. It maintains community consciousness and brotherhood among the members of the groups. It keeps a group organised and is a symbol of its unity. A tribe is divided into several septs according to different totems. Different interpretations regarding the origin of totem have been presented by Hopkins, Taylor, Risley, S. C. Roy and Hutton. Whatever may be the origin of totem it can be said that it occupies the most important place in tribal religion, not only in India but almost everywhere in the world where tribes exist.

Modern Trends in Tribal Culture

Due to contact with Hindu and Western cultures, the tribal culture has been changing constantly. This cultural change has been effected through the following processes :

1. *Simple Adoption* : In this process of cultural change a tribe simply adopts the culture of another tribe ; for example, the Worli tribe of Bombay state, formerly used to wear only a cloth, Now they use shirt, turban and dhoti due to the influence of the Koli tribe.

2. *Acculturation* : Where one culture almost engulfs another culture and changes it, the process is known as acculturation. This involves a wider and deeper cultural change. For example, the Indian tribal culture is being constantly influenced by Hindu culture, so much so that some tribes are almost Hindu in culture. An example of this type of cultural change can be found in the Gond tribe.

3. *Assimilation* : In this process of cultural change, a culture is not only adopted, but also assimilated and, therefore, becomes an integral part of the adopting culture. This process is seen among tribes who, leaving their difficult mountain tracts and deep forests, come to the plains and stay there. Such tribes in India have been assimilated in Hindu society, e.g., the Santhals of Bengal have assimilated Hindu culture in almost every aspect of their social and cultural organisation.

According to D. N. Majumdar, the Indian tribes can be classified into two groups on the basis of the processes of cultural change. Firstly, there are assimilated tribes whose culture has been completely assimilated by some other culture. Secondly, there are adaptive tribes whose culture is gradually adapting to some new culture.

Impact of Hindu and Christian Cultures on Tribes

The impact of cultural contact with Hindus and Christians has resulted both in evil and favourable consequences. This cultural contact has removed many superstitions and evil customs from the tribes. The Christian missionaries have opened hospitals and schools for the benefit of tribal people. These have decreased the influence of diseases and illiteracy. The Christian missionaries are also running several orphanages in tribal areas. They are giving monetary help to the needy tribals and helping in the improvement of the levels of health and education. These favourable influences, however, are nothing compared to the evil consequences of the cultural contact. The following are the most important evil consequences :

1. *Degeneration of Collective Life* : Due to the influence of western culture many of the tribals have begun to hate their traditions and customs and they are gradually disappearing with the result that the collective life is degenerating.

2. *Social Disorganization* : This has led to disorganization of family and social institutions. The tribals who have been converted to Christianity try to imitate European culture and hate their tribal brothers. This has led to social disorganization everywhere.

3. *Economic Exploitation* : The civilized traders, contractors and religious missionaries have also exploited the tribal people economically. Misusing their ignorance they have caught them in the net of indebtedness and robbed their money and land.

4. *Moral Degeneration* : The civilized people have spread gross moral degeneration in tribal society. Poor tribal women have been made to prostitute themselves. The evil of drinking and using all sorts of intoxicants has increased among the tribals. Prostitution

has led to increase in venereal diseases. The tribes living near cities are the worst affected in this regard.

5. *Gradual Disappearance* :- The above-mentioned evil consequences of tribal contact with other cultures have led to the gradual disappearance of some tribes, as in the case of Andmani, Korawa, Toda and Chenchu tribes.

Tribal Problems

The Indian tribes at present confront mainly two types of problems. Firstly, those which are also faced by other people of the country, and secondly those which are peculiar to tribal people. In this latter type of tribal problems the following are the most important :

1. *Cultural Problems* : Due to contact with other cultures, the tribal culture is undergoing a revolutionary change. Due to the influence of Christian missionaries, the problem of bilingualism has developed leading to indifference towards tribal language. The tribal people are imitating western culture in different aspects of their social life and are giving up their own culture. An important influence of cultural contact is seen in the form of disappearance of youth dormitories. Imitation of the western dress and modes of living has led to the degeneration of tribal life and tribal arts, such as dance, music and different types of crafts.

2. *Religious problems* : Due to the conversion of many tribal people to Hindu and Christian religion, the tribal groups have been divided into several sects on the basis of religion. This has shattered their collective life and conflicts and dissensions are increasing. The tribal people are gradually forgetting their tribal religion. This has led to social disorganisation.

3. *Social Problems* : Due to the influence of Hindu community the tribals are facing the problem of increasing bride price. This has encouraged elopement of girls and their forcible abduction by males. Another social problem created by the tribal contact with Hindus is the evil custom of child marriage. The contact with the civilized society has increased premarital and extra-marital sexual relationships in tribal society and the number of dissolution of marriages is also increasing. This has also increased the inci-

dence of prostitution and venereal diseases.

4. *Economic Problems* : The contact with the civilized world has led to the disintegration of the entire economic system of the tribal people. They have forgotten their ancient crafts. Most of them are working as labourers in plantations, agricultural farms, factories and other jobs. The employers everywhere misuse the ignorance of the tribal people, take maximum work from them and pay them the minimum in return.

Tribal Welfare

The Indian Constitution has laid down important provisions for the welfare of tribal people. Posts have been reserved for them in public services, both in the States and at the Centre. Seats have been reserved for their representatives in the State Legislatures and in the Indian Parliament. Special provisions have been made regarding their welfare administration. District and regional councils have been established to carry out their welfare. The government have given special attention to their educational and economic development. All this, however, has not appreciably improved the condition of tribal people. The following suggestions can be made connection with tribal welfare :

1. *Economic Reforms* : Efforts should be made to encourage tribal people to permanently settle for cultivation, because the shifting cultivation practised by them results in much wastage. The co-operative forests utilization societies can help the tribal people in utilizing the forests in which they live. The government should arrange for technical help and education to improve the condition of tribal crafts and provision should be made for the marketing of the goods produced by them. Laws should be strictly enforced in tribal areas to solve the problem of indebtedness and to restrict exploitation. Co-operative credit societies can be organised to provide money for small scale industries. Labour laws should be strictly enforced in tribal areas.

2. *Educational Reforms* : The main cause of the poor state of tribal society is their widespread illiteracy. Spread of education, therefore, should be given primary consideration. Tribal education

should be imparted through their own language and in their own cultural background. Colleges should be established to safeguard tribal fine arts. Provision should be made for technical and commercial education of the tribes. Along with education, tribal music, dance, plays and recreation should be encouraged. Religious dogmatism and superstitions should be removed through scientific education.

3. *Reform in the Level of Health* : Efforts should be made to improve the level of health of the tribal people. This will require provision of medicines, pure water, nutritive food, clean and properly ventilated houses and general healthy atmosphere.

4. *Social Reforms* : Whatever may be the opposition from certain vested interests, efforts to carry out social reforms among tribals must be kept up. The evil customs of bride price, magic and ritualism, child marriage, prostitution, etc., should be removed. These social reforms can be carried out only after economic reforms.

5. *Political Reforms* : It is a pity that the government officials posted in tribal areas misuse the ignorance of tribal people and exploit them for different purposes. They scorn the tribal culture and are completely indifferent to their welfare. The government should appoint such officials as are conversant with tribal culture to improve the condition of tribal people.

Governmental Efforts for Tribal Welfare

In free India the State and Central Governments have made incessant efforts in the direction of tribal welfare. At the central level a Commissioner attached to the Home Ministry takes care of tribal welfare. Under him there are several Regional Assistant Commissioners whose number has now increased to 16. In the States, there are special Directorates of Tribal Welfare. In Assam five District and Regional Councils have been established for tribal welfare. Tribal Research Institutes for the study of tribal culture and language are working in Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and other States. Efforts are being made to expand educational facilities in tribal areas. Thousands of scholarships have been granted for special seats for tribal people in medical, engineering and

technical colleges. Posts have been reserved for them in public services. Primary and secondary schools have been established in tribal areas where there is provision for free education.

In the political field the tribes send their representatives to State and Central Legislatures, some of whom have risen to the rank of Deputy Ministers and Ministers. Many tribal youths qualify for All India Services and their number is gradually increasing.

For the economic regeneration of the tribes, the Government have enforced rules regarding land ownership and utilization of land. Crores of rupees have been spent for the development of cottage industries. The Community Projects have been established everywhere. Grain shops have been opened which provide improved varieties of seeds. Laws in connection with debt have been enforced. Special multi-purpose tribal blocks have been created. Shifting cultivation is restricted and tribal families have been permanently settled on suitable land. Efforts have been made to provide housing facilities in some tribal areas. Hospitals have been opened which provide free medicines, check epidemics and cure all types of diseases. Research institutes have been opened for the study of tribal culture and language. New roads have been constructed and old roads improved in tribal areas. Personnel working for tribal welfare are given special training for this purpose. Institutes for their training have been established in Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Assam, Rajasthan, Bombay and other States.

The above brief outline of the governmental efforts in the direction of tribal welfare shows the extent of work that has been done in different five year plans. This has definitely led to some improvement in some directions. The solution of tribal problems, however, requires multisided planning. D. N. Majumdar has rightly said, "There is no one solution to tribal problems, there is no common platform to demand it. There are levels of cultural development and there are different patterns of life that the tribes own. In any scheme of rehabilitation of tribal life, the attitudes and configurations of culture must be known to work out plans, and what is true of one culture area may not be so for a second."⁶

REFERENCES

1. Majumdar, D. N., *Races and Cultures of India*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay (1958), p. 355.
2. Majumdar, D. N. and Madan, T. N., *Social Anthropology*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay (1957), p. 156.
3. Taylor, E. B. *Primitive Culture*, John Murray, London (1913), p. 842.
4. Kessing, M. F., *Cultural Anthropology* (1958), p. 332.
5. Hoebel, E. A., *Man in the Primitive World*, McGraw Hill Book Co., New York (1919), p. 512.
6. Majumdar, D. N., *Races and Cultures of India*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay (1958), p. 385.

CHAPTER 5

CHRISTIAN SOCIAL SYSTEM AND INSTITUTIONS

The Christian community is the largest in number in India next only to Hindus and Muslims. Of course, Christianity is the most populous religion of the world. Proselytisation, spreading the Gospel, is the most fundamental tenet of the Christian creed. Accordingly, the followers of Christianity are spread all over the world and their number in most of the countries of the world is fairly sizeable. Christianity is based on the tripartite plank of faith, hope and charity and is strenuously opposed to any distinction between man and man. All men are equal before God. Yet, paradoxically enough, the Christian society is divided into classes and the differences among its classes are sharp and deep. In India, however, the main bases of those differences are wealth, rank and social status. The Western Christians are broadly Catholic and Protestant with many sub-sects. Caste distinctions, as noticed in Hindu society, are absent in the Christian society; but the evil of casteism has surreptitiously infiltrated into the Indian Christian community. In his *Myth of Caste System*, Dr. N. Prasad has distinguished following groups among Kerala Christians. Kerala, incidentally, is the Indian state which has the highest concentration of Christians. In Kerala the Christians control and dominate the state politics. Following are the groups of Christians in Kerala : (1) Chaldean Syrians; (2) Jacobite Syrians; (3) Latin Catholics; (4) Marthomite Syrians; (5) Catholics and (6) Protestants. In these groups of Christians we find the same types of differences, tensions and competition as in the case of castes among Hindus. Each group considers itself to be the closest to the original Gospel and therefore higher than others in order and hierarchy. Many

Christians look down upon backward Hindu castes and observe a system of untouchability. They do not employ them as domestic help. Thus though Christianity is strenuously opposed to casteism and classes among men in theory, in actual practice they observe casteism and practise untouchability. As India's most enlightened Statesman Jawaharlal Nehru observed in his book *Discovery of India*, "Christianity comes here 1800 years ago and settles down and gradually develops its own castes." Such is the climate and social environment of India that all outside groups, while passing on something of their own to the Indian society, have assimilated into themselves the basic character of Indian culture.

Christian Family

The conception of family in Christianity is quite different from that of other religions. In *Order of the Solemnization of Matrimony in the Anglican Book of Common Prayer* the following three aims of the family have been given :

- (1) *Propagation of Race* : In the fear of God and praising His kindness and grace to propagate one's kind.
- (2) *Remedy Against Sin* : The persons who are unable to control their sexual impulse and lead the life of celibacy marry and procreate.
- (3) *Fellowship, Help and Comfort* : In hard times and in times of sickness and disease, man and woman may help each other and provide comfort and succour.

Thus the aim and purpose underlying the Christian institution of family is threefold : procreation, avoidance of sin and mutual aid. The founders of Christianity realized that flesh is weak and man easily descends into the morass of orgy of sex and violence. Free love leads to utter promiscuity and exclusive concentration on the ways of flesh, as a result of which man sinks into the bottomless pit of immorality. In order to save man from leading a life of sin and destruction, Christianity advocated the institution of family whereby wild human impulses could be kept in check and continuation of human species could be ensured. The head of the Christian family is the father but the mother has also been given her due

share. In practice the mother has come to play a crucial role. The Christians living in the villages are usually living as joint family; but in cities the single unit of family is the rule. The customs, traditions, mores, rites and practices followed by Christian families in India are heavily influenced by the Western civilization and culture.

Marriage in Christianity

As may be clear from the foregoing discussion of the Christian family, the institution of marriage is not ineluctable, not an absolute imperative or necessity according to Christianity. The highest ideal of human life is a life of celibacy. Sexual indulgence is sinful. However, since it is not practically possible for the vast majority of humanity to lead the life of celibacy, sex must be controlled and regulated. Without control and regulation sex is an unpardonable sin. Therefore, according to Christianity, the institution of marriage is one such way to regulate and control sex and ensure healthy procreation and mutual love among men and women. Some Christian fathers are eloquent about the virtue of sex control through marriage and have declared that marriage is an institution sanctioned and blessed by God. The primary aim of Christian marriage is procreation and healthy development of one's personality. The secondary aim of marriage is the establishment of family. According to the constitution of the United Church of Northern India, marriage is a sacred institution and it has been blessed by God and it is a natural thing. Marriage is a sacrament in which man and woman are bound for ill or well. They share each other's destiny and ride the course of life together through all its ups and downs. The Christian marriages are solemnized in Churches and require the blessing of the Bishop.

In the choice of life-partners, Christians provide ample freedom to boys and girls. Unlike the arranged marriages among Hindus, the general rule in the Christian marriage is that it is born out of the free choice of the man and the woman and it is an expression of mutual love and affection. A Christian marriage is preceded usually by a long period of courtship in which the pros-

pective spouses have ample opportunity of understanding each other and knowing the good and bad in each other.

Besides, the scope of Christian marriage is wide. With the exception of blood-relationships, e.g., brother, sister, nephew, niece, Christians are permitted to marry anyone they like. Marriage is regarded as a bond of love by Christians, therefore they attach crucial importance to love. For marriage, the boy and the girl must be members of some church and no marriage is considered solemnized unless there is Church certificate to that effect.

After the desire for marriage is conveyed to the priest by the parents of the bride and the bridegroom the priest conveys the same to the council of Bishops. Thus when the consent of the council is obtained, a day is appointed for betrothal. On a fixed day, the members of both the sides gather in the Church and an exchange of rings, coconut and money is made as an expression of the acceptance of the marriage bond. The parents of the bridegroom throw a feast to the other party. Subsequent to betrothal, the boy and the girl are free to meet each other though they are not expected to have sexual relations.

Three weeks prior to marriage, a notice regarding a particular marriage is posted in front of the Church on every Sunday. Anyone can file an objection with the Church after paying the fee for this purpose. If the objection is upheld by the Church, the marriage cannot take place, otherwise the marriage is solemnized on the fixed day.

Divorce

Though Christianity considers marriage a sacrament and, therefore, as indissoluble, the practice of divorce is quite common among Christians all over the world. The marriage and divorce among Indian Christians were first sought to be regulated in 1872 by the Christian Marriage Act. The Divorce or Marriage Dissolution Act of 1896 is applicable to Indian Christians, too. This act provides for, under certain specified circumstances, for judicial separation, protection order and restitution of conjugal rights.

Among Christians re-marriage is allowed and widows and widowers are encouraged to marry. There is, however, no system

of child marriages among Christians. Today the most besetting and baffling problem for Christians is the instability of marriage, growing tendency towards free-love, divorce, wife-swapping and the general disregard among Christians for the sanctity of marriage. The Church leaders and other thinkers are disturbed over it. The historians liken the present state of affairs to the declining Roman Empire days.

Indian Christian Marriage Act 1862

This Act determines the categories of Christians who are eligible for marriage. They are given licence for this purpose. The central and provincial governments are authorized to appoint a Registrar for this purpose. The same function can, however, be performed by a Magistrate as well.

According to the Rule No. 10 (ten) of the Act, the marriage can be solemnized any time between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.

Rule No. 11 (eleven) provides that marriage should be solemnized in Churches alone.

Rule No. 12 (Twelve) provides that either of the spouses shall inform the priest and fill the form given in schedule number one.

Rule No. 13 (Thirteen) provides for the publicity of the marriage. It should be notified every Sunday three weeks before marriage on the Church Notice Board.

Rule No. 14 (Fourteen) says that if a marriage is solemnized at some private place, the Registrar shall be informed thereof and he shall publicize the marriage.

According to Rule 15 (Fifteen), if either of the spouses is a minor, the fact should be brought to the notice of the Registrar.

According to Rule 16 (Sixteen), in case any spouse is a minor the consent of the parents is essential.

The fourth chapter of the Act deals with the registration of the marriage.

The fifth chapter contains Rules 38 to 59 and these pertain to the system of the marriage.

The sixth chapter contains rules for native Christians. The important among these are :

- (1) At the time of marriage the age of the boy should be more

than 16 and of the girl more than 13.

(2) At the time of marriage no other spouse, that is, wife or husband should be alive. This is the rule forbidding bigamy.

(3) There should be two witnesses for a marriage and the parties to marriage should take the oath of marriage before the Registrar.

In the seventh chapter of this Act, penalty for any irregularities committed in connection with marriage had been prescribed. For taking false oath or submitting false certificates, the person concerned could be sent to jail under the Section 193 of the Indian Penal Code. He could be fined as well. For a person who married without licence, three years' imprisonment was prescribed.

Indian Divorce Act 1896

This Act promulgated in 1896 was applicable to all those marriages in which at least one spouse was Christian. Of course, if both were Christians, there could be no doubt about its applicability. This Act was divided into 14 chapters having 62 sections and 14 schedules.

Sections 10 to 17 of the Act dealt with the dissolution of a marriage. According to section 10 a wife could ask for divorce on the following grounds :

(1) Forsaking of Christianity by husband and entering into another marriage.

(2) Desertion of wife by husband.

(3) Sexual immorality by husband.

(4) Marriage with another woman and sexual indulgence.

(5) Raping of the wife or forcing her to submit to anal intercourse or sodomy and other bestial acts.

(6) Immoral and sadistic behaviour.

(7) Desertion of wife for two years without reason and sexual indulgence out of marriage.

The husband can seek dissolution of the marriage if the wife is sexually corrupt. Section 11 gives exceptions in this matter.

According to the section 17 of the Act, after a thorough examination of the charges levelled by either spouse against the other and satisfying itself about their veracity, the District Court can grant divorce. But this action of the District Court must be

endorsed by the High Court. Without an endorsement by the High Court the instrument of dissolution of marriage is not valid.

In accordance with Section 16 of the Act, either husband or wife can apply for the dissolution of the marriage.

According to Section 19, a marriage can be declared void on the following grounds :

(1) If at the time of marriage or at the time of litigation the husband is impotent or the woman is sterile, or unable to bear children ;

(2) If either of the spouses is a blood relation ; and

(3) If either of the spouses is mad or an idiot or had previously married and the husband or wife of the previous marriage is alive.

The order nullifying the marriage must be endorsed by the High Court.

According to Section 12 of the Act, judicial separation can be sought on grounds of sexual corruption, desertion or brutality. The judicial separation is a sort of temporary dissolution of a marriage.

If a wife is not covered by the Indian Succession Act, she may seek a protection order. Thus she reserves the right to her property.

Section 32 of this Act accepts the right of restitution of conjugal rights, i.e., on the expiry of judicial separation the partners may reunite in matrimonial bond.

According to Section 34, the aggrieved husband may demand compensation from a man who has sexual indulgence with his wife.

According to Section 57 of the Act, six months after the dissolution of the marriage, the spouses can remarry.

It is clear from the above description that divorce and judicial separation are relatively easy among Christians. Due to this laxity, Christian marriage is threatened by instability and disruption. To improve matters the divorce should be made difficult so that the rate of divorce may be checked from deteriorating beyond recovery.

The Status of Christian Women

On the whole, the condition of Christian women is far better in Indian society in comparison to the condition of Hindu and Muslim

women. Christian women have equal and same opportunities of development and progress as are available to Christian males. The percentage of literacy is relatively high among Christian women. In Kerala, 46 per cent Christian women are educated. Besides being educated, Christian women have earned name and fame in the fields of music, fine art, radio and television. They are good singers, dancers, painters and radio artists. Christian women enjoy equal conjugal rights. They have the same rights to marriage and divorce as are enjoyed by their husbands. Christian women are particularly skilled in nursing, secretaryship, office work, salesmanship, etc. They are free to marry or stay unmarried. Marriage is a matter of choice and not compulsion for them. Many Christian women prefer not to marry but there is no social stigma against them as in the case of Hindu and Muslim women. In economic field and social mixing they are equal to men. Men do not play a dominant role. Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, Mrs. Violet Alva, etc., have enjoyed glorious positions in political field. They have worked as Ministers in the Central cabinet. Compared to their Hindu and Muslim counterparts, Christian women are more fortunate in enjoying good social status. However, freedom of movement and equality of rights have not been wholly beneficial to Christian women. Some of them have used their opportunities to lead clandestine immoral life. They are considered by Indian men to be more receptive to their advances and in the process some are led astray.

CHAPTER 6

RURAL SOCIAL SYSTEM AND INSTITUTIONS

History of Rural Community in India

From the pre-historic period the village has been an important unit of the Indian social and economic organisation. The oldest books in India are the Vedas. And even among them, Rig Veda is considered to be the most ancient. According to Rig Veda, society is divided into many dynamic, heirarchical groups. Of these the smallest unit is the family. Many such families constitute one village. One *vish* is composed of many villages. Many such *vishas* taken together constitute one *jana* and many *janas* together make one *rashtra* or nation. In this way, according to Rig Veda, the village is the unit of social and political organisation. In the ancient literature, the word village was interpreted as a group of families living at one place. The leader of a village was known as *Gramini*.

Literature subsequent to Rig Veda is more elaborate in its description of the village. Mahabharata, whose period is estimated at between 200 B.C. and 200 A.D., has mentioned many types of groups. According to Mahabharata forts were constructed for the defence of the local groups. The population surrounding the forts was called the village, towns were bigger than villages but smaller than cities. The Mahabharata does not confine its description to the organisation of the village but also includes the description of inter-village organisation. According to Mahabharata the village is the rudimentary unit of administration. Its leader was called *Gramini*. The duty of a *Gramini* was to arrange for the defence of the village within a radius of two miles. A group of many villages

was governed by their leader. As a general rule such a group contained ten villages whose leader was called *Dasha Gramini*. The ten villages in this group had intimate mutual relationships. Over two *Dasha Graminis*, or in other words, over two groups of ten villages each there was one *vinshatik* leader. Accordingly, the *vinshatik* had twenty villages under his governorship. The group of villages was not limited to so small a number but goes on to a hundred or even a thousand villages. The leader of a group of hundred villages was a *Shata Gramini* while the administrator of a thousand villages was called an *Adhipati*.

Besides Mahabharata, many other books of ancient literature have mentioned the village but none of them has such wealth of detail. Mahabharata was followed, in its description of village, by *Manusmriti*. Manu has made a distinction between a village, a town and a city. These were placed in an increasing order of population. According to *Manusmriti*, the village is the smallest unit of administration. The village had its own official and its individual organization. In *Manusmriti*, as in Mahabharata, the leader of the village has been called the *Gramini*. Most of the problems arising in the village were solved by the villagers themselves. For example, things and places of public utility like wells, tanks, lakes, meadows, parks, etc., were looked after by the people of the village. Besides this, various problems relating to different aspects of the family, caste and society were taken up and solved by the villagers in their different villages. According to *Manusmriti* there was an authoritative person named *Sahastresh* over one thousand villages. The *Sahastresh* governed the *Shatesh* who held charge of hundred villages. In this descending order the *Shatesh* was followed by the *Vinshi* who was in charge of twenty villages. Next came the *Dashi* who was responsible for ten villages. And finally there was the elder of each village who was called a *Gramini*.

In this way, the villages in India have been continually developing over a very long period extending back into thousands of years. Fundamentally, the village is still the unit of the country in spite of the innumerable changes which it has undergone since the days of Mahabharata and *Manusmriti*.

Today, no less than at that time, there is a leader of the village who is responsible for the entire village in all matters. Even today many villages combine together to form groups in which many different mutual relations are possible. Hundreds of villages combine to constitute one cultural area which lends its individual cultural characteristics to each of these villages. But notwithstanding this fact it has to be remembered that no village in India today is completely self-dependent and independent. From every view point, be it social, economic or political, the village of today is dependent to a large extent upon people not belonging to the village. The villager of today is no longer a member of just a single rural community but a member of a caste, a religion and a nation as well. Hence, religious and political reasons compel him to think in terms of other people who are not members of his community. India is a democracy in which there are many states which, though united under a central government, are independent in many respects. Every state is further subdivided into districts and each district into *tehsils*. In each *tehsil* there are a number of villages. In this way, from the administrative view point, the public representatives or the leaders depend upon the officials of the *tehsil*. Different villages are governed by different men because they belong to different *tehsils*. But nonetheless the general laws of the state have to be obeyed by every one. Besides this, in big villages or in a number of small villages grouped together, there is a *panchayat* which serves to solve many of their social, economic and political problems. It is obvious that the modern Indian government wants to make the villages in the country self-dependent and independent units. The future of the country depends upon the organised villages, the more these villages are prosperous the more will the country be organised and prosperous. All the intelligent people in the country are aware of this fact. This has encouraged the study of the villages and movements have been organised for improvements in the villages and these movements have been helped by the Government.

Study of Rural Community in India

The study of sociology in India is not very old but even then there has been quite a detailed study of the different aspects of the rural communities. Since the country became independent the studies of rural communities were assisted by the Government. Similar studies were further encouraged by the point-four programme and America's Ford Foundation. Under the direction of Professor D. N. Majumdar the study of Mohana village in Lucknow district was carried out with economic assistance from the Ford Foundation. Later some assistance was forthcoming from the Planning Commission. The results of this study were published in 1958 in a book by Dr. Majumdar entitled *Caste and Communication in an Indian Village*. This assistance by the Planning Commission was not a novel enterprise since similar researches have been financed by it even before and after this particular instance. Dr D. G. Karve, who was at that time the Chairman of the Programme Evaluation Organisation of the Planning Commission, invited Oscar Lewis to study Rampura, a village near Delhi. The results of this study were published in 1958 in a book entitled, *Village Life in Northern India* published by the Illinois University. Before the publication of either of these two books, Dr. A.R. Desai in his book, *Introduction to Rural Sociology in India*, published in 1935 shed some light on the study of rural community and made an impassioned appeal for research in this direction. In 1955 when this book was no longer available, Dr. Desai published another book, *Rural Sociology in India* in which the latest studies of rural community in India were assimilated.

Besides Dr. Majumdar and Dr. Desai, the name of Dr. S. C. Dubey deserves mention among other scholars who have studied the rural community in India. The study of Shamirpet village in Hyderabad made by Dr. Dubey, was published in 1955 under the title *Indian Village*. This book occupies an important place in the literature relating to rural community in India. In 1958, another book, *India's Changing Village* was published by Dr. Dubey. In 1956, the *Journal of Asian Studies* published a research paper, "Cultural Factors in Rural Community Development" which was written by Dr. Dubey. Besides Dr. Dubey, Prof. M. N. Srinivas

also did important work in the field of rural sociology in India. In 1958, he edited a book, *India's Villages* which was a collection of studies of various villages in different states of India. The year 1952 saw the publication of his book, *Religion and Society Among the Coorgs of South India*.

The books mentioned above do not constitute the entire body of literature on this subject, besides which a number of other works have been published on the study of rural community in India. It is neither feasible nor indispensable to make a detailed description of these books and research articles here.

Essential Characteristics of the Village Community

From the view point of sociology, the village and the town differ in respect of their importance. In our society the major essential features of the village from the sociological point of view are as follows :

1. *Bases of social organisation* : In India there are more than half a million villages. Eighty per cent of the Indian population lives in these villages. India is predominantly an agricultural country. Thus in every respect the future of India depends upon the villages.

2. *Intimate social relationships* : The relations between the primary groups and families in the villages are intimate. The family fulfills the needs of its members in all aspects of their life and exercises control over them. It is through the family that the new members are initially introduced to the customs, conventions and culture of the society. In this way the village people hold family as an institution having status, and the result is that individuality does not develop properly in the members of a family. Due to limited contact with the external world, their view point is narrow and they are aggressively opposed to violent change. In the village the relations among the people are direct and intimate so that often the entire village is organised like a family.

3. *Preservers of ancient culture* : From the sociological viewpoint also the villages are important because they preserve the ancient culture of the Indian society. India is an agricultural

country. The life of the villagers depends considerably upon natural forces due to their occupation which is agriculture, and thus they worship natural forces like the sun, rain, etc. They are sometimes observed resorting to magic in order to gain the assistance of these forces. The villagers in India still exhibit faith in the doctrine of *Karma* — fundamental principle in Indian culture — and lead a simple and natural life dominated by sacrifice, theistic tendency and the importance of religion in every aspect of life.

4. *Ideal democracy* : Since ancient times the Indian village is an ideal democracy. Life in each village is self-dependent. Most of the people are agriculturists, and besides agriculture the farmer is quite capable of handling the work generally done by a carpenter, blacksmith, mason, veterinary surgeon, woodcutter and sometimes even a weaver. In some developed villages these occupations are carried on by different people, but whatever the conditions, all the needs of each village are generally fulfilled in the village itself. In the village even today the sense of neighbourhood is not ignored and is given considerable importance. The community of ideals, customs and social forbearance is even today an important feature of the village. In its long history, the Indian society retained its strength and organisation as long as the villages were well knit and well organised. From the medieval ages till now the condition of the village has continuously deteriorated. But now, after the country has become independent, the network of social reconstruction is being implemented with the village as the unit and the basis. Thus, from the sociological point of view, the villages are more important than the towns.

In this way the importance attributed to the villages is far greater than the importance which may be attributed to the towns of India. It is for this reason that thinkers like Mahatma Gandhi accorded a central place to rural reconstruction in the over-all plan for the reconstruction of the entire country. The Ram Rajya of Mahatma Gandhi is based on the uplift of the villages. The Indian Government have also accepted the importance of the development of rural industries and rural reconstruction. Social and economic reconstruction of India's rural communities is being implemented

through the establishment of co-operative societies and community development plans. India is a democracy, hence the future of the country depends upon the villages because the major portion of the population lives in them and the country cannot hope to achieve any progress without removing the social and economic backwardness of the villages. Social and economic reconstruction of the country can be achieved only by a social and economic reconstruction of the villages.

5. *Joint family* : Another characteristic of the life of the village is the joint family system. In the village the family has strict control over the individual. Generally, the father is the head and representative of the family and is also invested with the duty of maintaining discipline among the members. His orders are obeyed by all the members of the family. In marriage, festivals, business, etc. it is he who manages the affairs of the family. All the members of the family share the burden of the family occupation. The men plough the field, the women harvest the crops and the children graze the cattle. In this way, working together the villagers maintain a sense of co-operation among themselves. Much attention is directed towards the preservation of the family honour and utmost care is taken to observe and maintain the traditions of the family.

6. *Simple living* : The villagers have limited means and they do not indulge in ostentation. People who go about in a manner calculated to attract attention are not looked upon with respect. Even in the materialistic age of today, the generally accepted ideal in the village is one of simple life and high thinking. In the village every individual endeavours to attain and observe the ideals of his family and caste. The villagers are a simple and plain people. They are incapable of making false pretences of cultured behaviour and gaudiness, nor are they capable of boasting. They have sympathy for man and want to meet each other on a natural and human footing. Their life is tranquil, peaceful and plain. Mental conflicts and complexities are almost absent. They spend their life in the lap of nature. In their life there is a determined pattern and method for everything so that they are spared

the labour of continually pondering over them. Certain norms governing marriage and business, etc., are irrevocably fixed. Hence there is not much occasion for mental conflict. Trade in the village is not carried out on a large scale and consequently there is not much specialization of occupations. The small needs of life are fulfilled by the farmers themselves. Class conflict is generally lacking. Rich and poor, small and big, high and low — all live in an atmosphere of natural co-operation and accept the discipline of the village. The level of morality is high. Any girl in a village is generally treated as a sister or a daughter by most of the male members of the village, by the very virtue of her being a member of the village.

In this way, life in the village is more natural and orderly. There are many occasions for conflict between father and son, master and servant, creditor and debtor, husband and wife, mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, etc. In spite of the fact that the income of villagers is very low, their life continues in a vein of satisfaction because of its very simplicity.

Change in Village Life

But the elements of village life which have been delineated above can be found to exist only in those villages which have remained unaffected by the influence of the towns. Otherwise, as a general rule, these elements are vanishing from the village life. The community consciousness in village life is steadily decreasing. The control of the caste *panchayats* is almost non-existent. The villagers who work in the towns as labourers acquire such habits as drinking, prostitution, falsehood, unnecessary show and needless boasting, etc. and when these villagers return to their native villages they spread such immorality. The village youths studying in the towns also become addicted to irresponsibility and sedentary habits and when they exhibit the same habits in their villages the other simpleminded adolescents are also corrupted. The village belle living in the town is even more adept at the use of cheap cosmetics and on her return to the village she too spreads this habit among her sisters in the village. Now-a-days, the villagers

are using aids to beauty in larger measure than before and the level of health in the village is fast deteriorating because milk and its byproducts from the villages are sold in the towns and secondly, the money thus earned is being wasted on useless things. Though education is spreading the people have turned their back to the old ideal of simple living and high thinking. Even though they may appear plain in their dress and way of living due to poverty and simple due to insensitivity, they are not the least scrupulous in adulterating commodities which they sell.

The convention of hospitality is no longer observed. Sex relations are marked by a lack of responsibility. The joint family is fast disintegrating. The number of thefts, abortions, murders, assaults, litigation, etc., is steadily increasing. The old customs are being violated. The bonds of caste and society are disregarded. Similarly, family ties are also being discarded. Individualism, materialism and rationalism are increasing. Hence the only elements which now characterize village life are agriculture which is the major occupation of villagers, small population, lack of transport facilities, lack of scientific comforts, mud houses, unmetalled roads and natural environment, etc.

In fact, the villages everywhere are at present passing through a transitional period. The old relational bonds and ties have fallen into disfavour and they cannot be reinstated in the original form. Even now the villages can be given an equally simple if not simpler, plainer and higher life by improving the conditions in these villages, through the establishment of *panchayats*, spread of education, economic reform in agriculture, etc. Rural reconstruction through scientific method is very essential for this. In all the agricultural countries in the world, this matter has received considerable attention and much progress has been made in Russia and China. It is a matter of great satisfaction that the Indian Government is not oblivious to this. Crores of rupees are being spent on new plans of rural reconstruction. By these endeavours the village will once again become as well-organised and integrated as before.

Factors of Change

A study of the factors and patterns of change in the rural

community will provide an insight into the development of welfare work in the rural sphere because development is nothing more than change in any desired direction. In order to affect social, economic, political and any other kind of development in the villages it is necessary to change them. With respect to the way in which this change can be brought about, it is necessary to know the effect of some particular factors upon the rural community, as well as the direction of and the reason for this change.

Even though it is very difficult to analyse all the direct causes of change in rural community, it is nevertheless possible to recognise the major factors which may be placed in the following classes :

1. Natural factors,
2. Technological factors,
3. Social factors,
4. Economic factors,
5. Cultural factors, and
6. Political factors.

1. *Natural factors* : The natural factors of change in the rural community include all those natural elements which are found in the place in which that specific rural community exists. For example, the villages which have sprung up close to the rivers and the villages prospering in the mountains show apparently the effects, respectively, of the rivers and the mountains. The social, economic, cultural and religious life of the rural community settled in the bamboo forest exhibits the effects of the bamboos. In places frequented by seismographic disturbances the houses are constructed of wood. The vegetation and the animals peculiar to any place are most frequently consumed and employed in their native land. In the same way, the cottage industries which develop in any place bear a direct co-relation to the minerals found in that area. Rivers, floods, storms, rain, hale stones, earthquakes, mountains, vegetation, animals, etc., are the natural factors which influence the rural community. Whenever any one of them changes, the life of the rural community also changes with it. The geographers have written quite extensively on the subject of the effects of the geographical environment upon human life. The natural factors

shape the geographic environment. Their effects are universally known. If the Ganges alters her course to one mile away from her earlier course, then not only the economic life but also other aspects of the rural community situated upon the old banks of the river will be changed.

2. *Technological factors* : The natural environment alone does not transform human communities, because man constructs a fair portion of his environment for himself, and this also has widespread effects upon his life. Man creates a novel environment with the assistance of the technical factors and adapts natural environment to himself. These technological factors include all the inventions. Wherever electrical ploughshare has been made available, it has completely transformed the rural community. According to Prof. Ogburn the invention of the radio alone has resulted in nearly 150 major changes in social life. Machines have not been used as much in the Indian villages as they are in the villages of the West. But even then the work of grinding wheat and refining cotton has lost its flavour for the rural families since machines for such purposes were installed in their villages. This has influenced the life and conditions of the women. With the invention of steam and electrical power, all aspects of human life have undergone some change or the other.

3. *Social factors* : The social factors have comprehensive effect upon the social life of the rural community. For example, the existence or the absence of the *sati* custom, child marriage, negation of widow remarriage etc. definitely have some effect on the life of the rural community, this effect being particularly reflected in the condition of the female population. The major social factors which influence the life of the Indian rural community are caste system, joint family, *Jajmani* custom, various laws of marriage as well as social and religious customs and traditions. Any change in any one of these factors results in a change in the rural community. For example, when the caste *panchayats* grow weak or lose power completely the inter-caste relations in the villages undergo a continuous change. In the same way changes can also be seen in the mutual relations between different castes due to the *Jajmani* relations having been broken off.

4. *Economic factors* : The economic factors include those which are related to agriculture, business and industries. As a result of the pressure upon land having increased in the villages, many people have migrated to the towns in search of employment. Living in the towns the moral life and values of a rural youth undergo a change which have their influence upon the moral life and values of other people in the village when he returns home. Wherever factories or mines have been established in the villages the relations between men and women have been influenced by their working together. Poverty is an economic factor and its wide-spread effects upon the life of the community are only too well known.

5. *Cultural factors* : Cultural factors include beliefs, assumptions, values, etc. Changes in them have repercussions on the entire social life. In India, wherever the Hindu, Muslim and Christian cultures have had an opportunity to meet, the cultural life of the rural community clearly evinces the influence of this. As a result of the influence of western culture the institution of youth dormitory is vanishing from many tribal villages. Among rural girls and boys, influenced by western culture, tendencies of individualism, materialism, and irresponsibility increase and these exert important influence upon rural institutions like family, marriage, caste system, etc.

6. *Political factors* : The rural communities are also influenced by political factors. For example, distinct differences may be seen between the rural communities under Hindu, Muslim and British Governments. After the country achieved independence, much awakening was in evidence in the villages. Besides the governments, political partyism also influences the villages. India is a democracy in which the public elects the representatives who run the administrative machinery. This is awakening political consciousness among the villagers.

Methods of Change in the Rural Community

Along with the study of the foregoing factors which bring about change in the rural community, it is also necessary to understand

factors by means of which social organisations or political parties create change in the rural community. The description of these will also make it evident as to which method should be employed in bringing about the desired change in the rural community in developing the rural welfare work. The following are the important among these methods :

1. *Reasoning* : Some people have confidence in reasoning with the village people in an effort to bring about some change in the rural community. This method does have some benefit but its major defect is that the people who make use of it do not themselves do anything actively and thus their word does not carry enough weight.

2. *Demonstration* : Thus the demonstrative method becomes more important than the method of reasoning, for it sets examples to the villagers. For example, just talking about the utility of any agricultural implement cannot be as beneficial as making use of it in some farms. As a result of viewing its functions the farmers will themselves take interest in it and adopt it.

3. *Compulsion* : As is obvious by its name this method resorts to enforcing the change compulsorily upon the rural population. In other words, the population is obliged to accept the desired change, and it is obvious that only the government can employ this method. Many States in India have forced the villagers to behave gently towards untouchables by proclaiming the practice of untouchability to be a crime. The advantage of this method is that the changes are effected quickly but it suffers from the drawback that it cannot create internal changes which can be brought about only by reasoning and demonstrative methods.

4. *Social Pressure* : Social groups make use of the method of social pressure in controlling and transforming the conduct of the individuals. As is obvious by its name, this method obliges the individual by exerting social pressure upon him. For example, the caste panchayats of the villages oblige the members of the caste to accept their decisions by threatening social extermination. This method certainly does prove quite effective due to sociability of men but it too suffers from an inability to achieve internal transformation.

5. *Contact* : Major changes come about in the rural communities which come into contact with urban communities. Change in the mode of living, dress, customs and values is seen when the tribal villages come in contact with the civilised people and when the villagers come in contact with urban culture.

6. *Education* : In India efforts are being made to introduce change in the villages through basic education, social education, etc., apparently with much success. In order to create communal and political consciousness among the villagers, it is necessary to impart proper education.

There are limitations to each of the above mentioned methods in bringing about change in the rural communities and thus any one of them alone cannot serve the purpose. For this reason need is often felt for using more than one method. In order to achieve the desired changes in the direction of rural development reasoning needs to be supplemented by demonstration. Where some people are not prepared to take the trouble of understanding it, it is proper to introduce the compulsory and social pressure methods. In every change education complementary to it should be imparted. In this way the desired changes in the rural community can be attained only by understanding all these methods and making use of them according to need and occasion.

Spheres of Change in Rural Community

Having studied the factors of change and the methods of change attention may now be directed towards the changes taking place in the different aspects of rural community life. This change can be seen in the following spheres :

1. *Change in the caste system* : During the British rule caste system suffered a severe set back in the village. Due to the British economic policy and new laws, different castes abandoned their traditional occupations and adopted other professions. Many Brahmins and Kshatriyas started farming. The members of the untouchable castes became agricultural labourers. The control of caste panchayat weakened. The status of an individual in the

village was now determined not only by his caste but also by his personality, financial condition and activities as well. Although the Brahmin is treated respectfully, the wealthy untouchable is not the recipient of any less respect even though he belongs to a lower caste. And at some places it may happen that he is respected even more than the poor Brahmin. Being assisted by government laws the lower castes no longer look upon themselves as inferior and in south India at some places the untouchables consider themselves impurified if they touch a Brahmin. If any Brahmin happens to come into their sector he is assaulted with brooms and, in extreme cases, strict measures are taken to purify the place which he has defiled by his touch.

Thus all castes are engaged in strengthening their individual organisations. Some castes have reinforced their organisation by forming associations for the protection of their interests. But even then the power of the caste panchayat, exercised in the form of control over the individual's behaviour, food habits, ways of living, etc., has almost died away. Even in such villages where the laws regarding touchability in the caste are observed, their breach in towns is condoned or not taken seriously. Although marriages are still contracted within the same castes, there is no bar to social contact among different castes. But, though the caste system thus appears to be growing weak, it seems to be gaining in strength in another direction. Casteism is increasing due to vested interests. In most of the recent political elections, it was observed that people generally voted for the members of their own caste. Even the political parties issued tickets only to those members whose caste was in majority among the electorate in a particular area. The elected persons also try to gain political advantage for their own castes. In this way, due to political and other interests, casteism is increasing. Some administrative authorities in government and non-government factories, offices, colleges and elsewhere think it desirable to employ only the members of their own caste.

2. *Jajmani system* : Jajmani system was based on the exploitation of the Kameen by the Jajman. As a result of the declaration equating all the citizens of free India and the efforts of the government to improve the condition of backward classes, the back-

ward classes have now gained a certain degree of self respect and their Jajmani relations with other castes are in the process of being broken off. Secondly, the circulation of money in place of services in the villages has also had a degenerating effect upon the Jajmani system. Thirdly, the Jajmani relations are also dying out because the caste panchayats have lost their power and the occupations are no longer based on caste. Mobility is also increasing in the rural areas due to an increase in the facilities of transport. All these causes have together worked to the detriment of the Jajmani system, but this does not mean that it has been completely eliminated from the villages. Signs of its presence are evident in all the recent studies of the rural communities although signs of their growing extinction are also evident in most studies.

3. *Family* : Although the joint families are still viewed with respect they are no longer the unit of rural community, having been replaced by nuclear families. Groups based upon similar interests are becoming stronger in place of the groups constituted from ancestry. With the increase of individualism the families are becoming smaller and the control exercised by the family over the individual members is also decreasing. But the ancestral group has not yet lost its power over the family completely. In the villages, as is wont to be in the towns, many of the activities of the family are being taken over by other groups. For example in the villages where a grinding machine has been installed the wheat is ground in the mill instead of at home. The women are progressively being more educated and being given many social, economic and political rights with the result that they are conscious of their position in the family which is continuously improving.

4. *Marriage* : The institution of marriage, just as that of the family, is also changing. The area of the selection of mate is increasing. There are not many examples of intercaste marriage even today. Generally, marriages are contracted between members of neighbouring villages. Although the marriages are decided upon by the parents it is considered quite proper to take the assent of the boy and girl, in particular that of the boy. The number of love marriages and divorces is negligible in most villages in India. The basis of the selection of the other party is also changing.

Although ancestry is still an important factor in marriage, more importance is now attached to the financial condition and education of the boy and the qualities of the girl. Among Hindus the demand for dowry is increasing and so is that of *Mehar* among Muslims. At the same time much wasteful expenditure in marriage ceremonies is now being avoided and the party accompanying the bridegroom is now smaller. The customs of marriage are also undergoing change. The system of child marriage is in its last throes and widow re-marriage is accepted.

5. *Customs and conventions* : The conventions of rural social life are continually changing. The *panchas* of the caste have also lost some of their power. Efforts to reduce the expenditure at social and other occasions are evident. The expenditure at various *samskaras* of life, death, christening, etc., have decreased. The expenditure in marriage has increased due to dowry. It has now become common to educate the boys and education among girls is also increasing. With the spread of education the superstitions are decreasing.

6. *Food habits* : The laws governing intercaste food habits are being relaxed. The use of vegetables, wheat, milk, etc. is increasing in the villages even though in the case of the villages near towns such commodities are transported to the towns and sold. The consumption of tea, sugar and tobacco has definitely increased in the villages. In some families in the villages tea is used throughout the year. The use of vegetable oils is also increasing.

7. *Clothing* : The clothes worn by the population in the villages are undergoing change. Among the men, Gandhi cap is replacing the turban while the younger girls have started wearing frocks. The boys have taken to shirts. The ladies wear blouses and the conventional skirt is no longer as popular as it used to be. Previously, people used handspun cloth but now-a-days mill made cloth is used more extensively. The women folk in the villages are now using more clothes of artificial silk, artificial jewellery and cheap cosmetics. The heavy silver jewellery has gone out of fashion. The boys have taken to keeping their heads bare while some educated young men use western dress. In spite of

the increasing propaganda for khadi, the villagers are using more of fine cloth than the thick khadi.

8. *Housing* : Although the condition of housing in the villages is still very bad, it is certainly improving. The number of cemented houses in the villages is increasing. The houses are more airy and cleaner than they used to be. In the houses more comforts are now provided. In the villages where electricity is available radios and electric fans can be seen in the more prosperous households. The tendency towards engraving figures is decreasing because it unnecessarily increases the expenditure. Latrines are not found in many houses and even in those houses where they have been provided only the women make use of them and that too very seldom. Previously, the floors in the houses used to be uncemented whereas to-day they are made of bricks and cement. Among the more prosperous families the drawing rooms can be seen to contain tables and chairs. Formerly, the houses used to be decorated with pictures of gods and goddesses but the pictures of such leaders as Gandhi and Nehru can now be seen. Previously, oil used to be burnt for light but now kerosene oil lanterns are used more popularly. Even stoves are now used for making tea in some families.

9. *Cleanliness* : Although not much attention is paid even now to cleanliness the attention directed towards it is certainly more than it used to be. Sometimes schools, panchayats, development blocks and other public institutions as well as the entire villages are cleaned. Even personal cleanliness is being attended to more than in the past. The use of safety razors is increasing. With popularisation of the methods of making manure from cow-dung the cow-dung which once used to lie around in the streets is now profitably used. The panchayats have directed their attention towards the cleaning of lanes, wells, public places etc.

10. *Health* : With the progress of sanitation and increase in the number of doctors in the villages, the state of health has improved in some villages. On the other hand, although medical facilities have definitely increased, this progress has been counteracted by an increase in the number of diseases. Not much

enlightenment has spread among the village folk in spite of the spread of family planning and birth control by the government. The state of health of the women will definitely improve when the simple means to control conception heralded by proper education become available. Due to the food problem existing in the country the poor people of the villages cannot get adequate and nutritious food and thus their health is not very good. As a result of the arrangements made by the government for vaccination and distribution of patent medicines, some control over small pox, malaria, etc., has been achieved. The health of the female members can be said to have improved with the end of veil system and the improvement in the condition of houses. But, on the other hand, the increasing use of tea, tobacco, vegetable oil, etc., is undermining the health of the villagers.

11. *Education* : Literacy is increasing among the inhabitants of the villages. Basic education and social education are on the increase; many of the states are making efforts to provide free and compulsory education to all the children in the villages. Many of the young men of the villages are going to towns to receive higher education. In the bigger villages high school and even intermediate colleges can be seen. In the rural area many institutes, agricultural colleges and degree colleges have been established.

12. *Economic changes* : The standard of living is rising in the villages creating a demand for new things, for which shops are being opened in the villages. The educated youngmen from the villages prefer salaried white collar jobs. The use of new tools is increasing in agriculture. The production has increased as a result of the new tools, new seeds and modern methods of farming. The condition of minor professions has improved with the opening of co-operative societies. The condition of financial capital has been improved with the opening of co-operative credit societies, grain banks and co-operative banks, and the indebtedness has decreased. The cottage industries have been encouraged by government aid. The per capita income has increased but so have the prices of the commodities. The condition of the farmers and people engaged in minor occupations has improved with the removal of intermediaries.

13. *Political changes* : With the establishment of panchayats in the villages political consciousness has increased. The villagers have also started becoming politically conscious and voice their criticism of government actions through their right to vote. In some villages even newspapers are available which, along with the radio, help to increase the political knowledge of the villagers. But the political parties have also created disunity and factionalism within the villages. The villages are not as awed of the government officials as they used to be before independence. Even though there are panchayats, litigation has increased in the villages. The community feeling has increased even though national consciousness has been aroused. Selfishness and individualism have increased along with co-operation.

Rural Religion

In all parts of the world, the rural population compares favourably with the people who inhabit the cities in matters of religion, being more inclined in this direction. This disparity arises from a number of factors of which the most prominent is their preoccupation with agriculture, which depends very much upon Nature despite stupendous progress that science may have made in any country. This dependence upon Nature gives an added importance to the natural forces in the life of man, who consequently indulges in a variety of religious activities, offerings and prayers designed either to pacify or to please the deified powers which play such an important role in his life. In the village, life is spent in the lap of nature. In sharp contrast with the life in the cities, where the invention of modern scientific implements has reduced materially the influence of the seasons and Nature upon the lives of the inhabitants, the life of the people in the villages is almost completely exposed to the vagaries of Nature, but at the same time the rustic derives satisfaction from the opportunity of observing at first hand Nature at its most beautiful and red in tooth and claw as well. Thus, rural religion originates in the worship of Nature. The same holds true in the context of Indian society also. Science has not made much progress in India, the preponderance of Nature

being evident in every aspect of life. All these causes, taken collectively, have the effect of giving much importance to the rural people in India.

Indian Rural Religion Is Practical

Thinkers in all times and at all places have agreed in regarding Indians as a religious-minded people. In the words of Sir Harcourt Butler, "The Indians are essentially religious as Europeans are essentially secular. Religion is still the alpha and the omega of Indian life." Besides being religious Indians are also professed to be of a philosophical propensity. Many people have looked upon Sankara's Mayavada as representative of Indian thought. Most thinkers conceive of Indians as a people who contemplate intently upon religion and philosophy, the after world, heaven, hell and salvation. Morris Opler has written, "The fact that the highest goal of Hindu is to eliminate earthly concerns, desires and personal existence itself, introduced a large element of asceticism, intellectualism, detachment, and withdrawal into Hindu philosophy. In no other country have so many men renounced the world, and in no other place is there so much fasting and mortification of the flesh. The world is considered transitory and an appearance. Reality is an escape from the world and from the forms which make existence in the world necessary." Thus Opler conceives Indian religion as impractical and escapist in the extreme. But, on the other hand, Oscar Lewis found Indian religion essentially practical and realistic, in the course of his study of Rampur village. Distinguishing between Indian classical religion and Indian rural religion, S.C. Dubey has written, "Clearly, Hinduism as it is practised in the village, is not the Hinduism of the classical philosophical systems of India for it possesses neither the metaphysical heights nor the abstract content of the latter. It is a religion of facts, and festivals, in which prescribed rituals cover all the major crises of life. Analysis of life histories reveals that spiritualism cannot be said to be the keynote in the life of the community, far from it the religion appears to be a practical one." Although it would not be very efficacious to apply the conclusions derived from the study of one particular village to the rural population of the country as a whole,

it can nevertheless be confidently asserted that rural religion which does not bear the mark of sanskritization, is realistic and practical. There are numerous causes which have precipitated this state of affairs; among them is the tremendous effort every villager has to exert in ensuring the livelihood of his family beside himself, which has the effect of limiting his viewpoint to the practical. For another, the villagers of India are not properly acquainted with the traditional Indian philosophy and in the absence of this orientation they do not evince any vivid stamp of philosophical thought. Yet another reason is the poverty and lack of education existing among the villagers. They harbour many superstitious beliefs, and they have to labour hard in life. In these circumstances it is almost inconceivable that there should be an element of intellectuality and spirituality in their religion. It is a different matter that it may appear more spiritual and escapist or fatalist in comparison with the rural religion characteristic of other countries.

Rural Gods and Goddesses

In general, the following classes of Gods and Goddesses are worshipped in Indian villages :

1. *Gods and goddesses of Hindus* : The rural Hindus everywhere worship the Gods and Goddesses of the Hindu Religion. The most important among them is Shiva, who is worshipped in different forms and under different names. Besides Shiva, this deity is also popularly known as Sankara and Bholebaba. Hanuman is also worshipped in the villages. His worship is believed to be instrumental in preventing many kinds of catastrophes. Besides these two the other deities worshipped in the villages of India are Vishnu, Rama, Krishna, Agni, Valmiki, Jagannath and Sun God, etc. People offer water oblations to the Sun God, who is believed to ensure a good day ahead for the worshipper. Besides the Gods, numerous Goddesses are worshipped, among them are Durga, Kali, Lakshmi, Sarasvati, etc. On the festival of Diwali, Ganesha is worshipped along with Lakshmi. The worship of Ganesha is considered essential on all auspicious occasions. Kali is believed to be capable of getting rid of different diseases. Durga

wards off any impending disaster, while Lakshmi is the Goddess of wealth. Saraswati is the goddess of knowledge.

2. *Non-Hindu gods and goddesses* : The Indian villager does not rest satisfied with worshipping this formidable repertory of Hindu Gods and Goddesses, but extends his respect and reverence to many other deities which cannot be called Hindu by tradition, among them being Shitala Maharani who is believed to protect people from smallpox and who sends troubles in the form of smallpox epidemic when displeased, Bhuiyaan Devi who is considered to be very powerful and Sati Maharani, etc. In any village where any Sati has come to favour, the place in the village is worshipped and sometimes even fairs are organised. Besides them, many saints are also worshipped in some villages. To these acts of worship are attached many stories of local interest.

3. *Rural gods and goddesses* : Besides the above mentioned Gods and Goddesses, every village has its own local God and Goddess. Often the place of worship of such a deity is outside the village, and it is worshipped from time to time. To it, too are attached many interesting and common tales.

4. *Worship of plants, trees and animals* : In the villages of India many trees, plants and animals are considered divine. The banyan, neem and pipal are treated as divine and worshipped. The worship of Tulsi in particular is considered important everywhere. The cow is considered to be sacred. Cow-dung is used to cover any place which is to be purified. At some places even the ox and the snake are objects of worship. In the villages where a tribe lives the animals and plants of totem are considered divine.

Beliefs in Ghosts and Witches

Besides the numerous Gods and Goddesses worshipped in the Indian villages, the rural populace credit the existence of ghosts, instituting different kinds of activities designed to appease them, please them or get rid of them. Whenever a man or a woman in the village comes to an untimely demise, or dies in an accident, or murdered, or commits suicide, it is believed that his or her soul is dissatisfied and roams the village in some or the other form. The souls of men become ghosts while the souls of the women become witches, both of whom are believed to inhabit

trees, graveyards, the banks of rivers, of ponds and sometimes even in the houses. The two kinds show an affinity for their own types and harass the living member of their corresponding sexes. When any man or woman comes under the influence of these ghosts and witches, his or her behaviour becomes manifestly abnormal and unconventional, and all the efforts made by the affected person take on a peculiar hue. The many kinds of mental derangements are not recognised as mental diseases affecting persons but are considered to be the effects of ghosts and witches and are treated accordingly. In order to get rid of the shadows of ghosts which hover over the demented person, peculiar kinds of treatments are applied. The specialist in these matters is the witch doctor, who may belong to any tribe. He is supposed to do away with the ghosts and witches by the force of his magic. He sometimes makes use of food and sweetmeats in getting rid of the ghosts. In this way, every effort, in the form of violence, threat, entreaty and skill, is made to appease these cruel souls and to get rid of them. In the process the afflicted person suffers extreme persecution which often takes the form of extreme physical torture which may sometimes lead even to the death of the person. But sometimes the person is cured and the witch doctor retains his custom. As a protective measure the witch doctor dispenses some charms also, which are tied round the arm or the neck of the person in the belief that it will cope with, and negativate, the effects of the wicked souls.

Belief in Good Souls

The inhabitants of the villages do not confine their credulity to a belief only in sick souls but they extend it to belief in some good souls as well. These souls do not suffer from any discrimination on account of sex, being either feminine or masculine. They are benevolent and assist people in different ways. If after the passing away of a saint or a great personage the people believe his soul to be dwelling within the village, they take it for granted that it is protecting the entire village. All kinds of gifts are deposited at the supposed dwelling place of this magnanimous being.

Faith in Dreams

Besides belief in these invisible souls, rural religion also includes faith in dreams. The faith in the importance of dreams is almost universal but their explanations in different places do not correspond. Generally, whatever a person dreams after four o'clock in the morning is believed to be prophetic, either for good or bad. Actually, even though the villagers themselves do not perceive any visible and special relation between what they see in dreams and the real world, yet they persist in their beliefs about the dreams. The main cause of this notion is their lack of education, due to which many facts are unthinkingly associated with dreams.

Ideas of Auspicious and Inauspicious

Many kinds of superstitions concerning good and evil, are to be found among rural people. For a particular activity some particular days and months are considered auspicious and as having a good portent. In the case of important works and rituals the local pundits make calculations and advise the interested parties in respect of the auspicious day and hour. In this way, any ritual necessitates the determination of a particularly conducive moment. But in a general sort of way, Friday and the month of Chaitra are considered auspicious. Besides these, particular attention is directed towards this aspect by the villagers in respect of travel. For example, it is considered a bad omen, even down right ominous, to travel towards the north on Thursday and Fridays. Travel in an easterly direction is not advised on Mondays and Saturdays. Sundays and Fridays are not to be utilised for travelling to West while Thursdays are not to be considered fit if one contemplates travelling towards the South. But to acquiesce to this consideration of the auspiciousness of particular days may become a hindrance in the performance of important activities. It is saying something in favour of human inventive genius when we say that the pundits have overcome this difficulty by suggesting that if one leaves the village before the break of day, this day leaves the direction of travel unmolested or uninfluenced by its auspiciousness or maliciousness.

Religious Considerations in Dietary Habits

Besides travel, another aspect of human life to be influenced by the auspiciousness of the various days in a week is the food taking. It is ordained that the morning meal, to be taken after a bath, should consist of different ingredients on different days. For example, it is good to eat betel on Sunday and curd on Tuesday.

Considerations of Good and Bad Omens

Along with the thought for the auspicious, rural religion devotes attention to considerations of good and bad omens. Especially, it is considered very detrimental if some bad omen is experienced when some new activity is being initiated. These bad omens take a variety of forms. It is considered to be a bad omen if one comes across a person blind in one eye during travel. It is not considered good to sneeze at the outset of a journey and, if one does sneeze, one should wait for a few moments. Similarly, it is a bad omen if a cat crosses one's path while one is proceeding somewhere. If a wolf accompanies a cat on such an occasion, it does not do anything to improve matters and the omen stays bad. If one looks into an empty pot, the success of a venture is jeopardized, it being safer to look into it when full, which is considered a good omen. Similarly, encountering a washerman or a dead body are good omens towards the successful completion of work.

Superstitions in Natural Phenomenon

The villagers attach all kinds of superstitious significance to natural phenomenon. For example, the solar and the lunar eclipses are believed to be the causes of the catastrophies brought about by Rahu and Ketu. An earth tremour is attributed to the undulations of the snake which bears the world on its hoods, a difficult job by any standards. Absence of rain or drought, too much rain, untimely rain etc., are attributed to displeasure of the God Indra. Superstitions are even more numerous in tribal villages where there is even greater ignorance and non-education, the fundamental cause of superstitions.

Assumptions Concerning the Supernatural

In rural religion where there is superstition, ignorance, unnecessary ritualism, etc., on the one hand, there are also a number of assumptions pertaining to the supernatural, on the other. For example, heaven, hell, rebirth, salvation, virtue, sin, etc., are everywhere believed to be real even though people differ from village to village in their explanations and understanding of them. Most of the people believe that heaven and hell are two good and bad places respectively where the souls of good and bad people enjoy in pleasure and suffer after death. On the other hand, some people believe that heaven and hell are attained not after death but in this very life. In the same way, people believe that man has to pass through eighty four lakh forms of life, although some, and probably a large majority of people do not corroborate, or agree with this. Good action is known as virtue and bad as vice but there is no concurrence of opinion with regard to what constitutes good and bad activities.

Moral Beliefs

In this way, many moral beliefs are also conjoined to rural religion. A good person is a soul superior to all and sundry, and yet all people do not agree as to the elements which are characteristic of these superior souls. Nevertheless, a benevolent person of high character who worships God with fervour is commonly recognised as a religious person or superior soul. And yet there is fair amount of polemic about what exactly benevolence is. Some people look at public service such as constructing concrete wells and tanks as benevolent, while others would append benevolence to lending money without charging interest. In spite of a lack of agreement, people generally look upon acts of kindness and assistance, both moral and concrete to the poor and the helpless, as benevolent. In quite the same way, people have not any one recognised opinion regarding sin. Theft is considered sinful in all civilized villages but tribal villages are more tolerant in this respect because they do not call this human shortcoming of making unpermitted use of another's property, sin. In the same way, the rural population of India does not tolerate extra marital sexual

relations and does everything to prevent them, and yet the same strictness of spirit on this subject is not universal. Prevarication, chicanery, etc. are everywhere considered sinful. Homicide or murder is almost universally considered sinful and treated as a heinous sin, and yet it may be considered justified by a group of persons under certain conditions which are unusual. Most of the people in the villages consider every act of violence or killing as sin, while others differ in their opinions.

Various Influences on Rural Religion

As a matter of fact, people belonging to a variety of religions, beliefs and cultures are found co-existing in the villages of India. The difference in culture is very well-marked and evident in a comparison between civilized village society and tribal village society. And there is a marked difference between Hindu religion and tribal religion. In the same way, some particular religions characterize certain villages when there is preponderance of people of one sect over people of another, while in most villages one comes across the most divergent religions. One comes across people belonging to both Hindu and Sikh religions in the villages of India and Muslims are scattered all over the country. Besides the influence of the variety of religions, rural religion is influenced also by the distance which separates the village and the town. The village farther away from the town will generally have a religion which is more dogmatic, superstitious, ignorant and credulous in matters pertaining to the supernatural, in comparison with the religion existing in a village which is more accessible to urban influence. Thus the influence of the town has the effect of moderating these factors. Another influential factor is the effect of education upon the institution of rural religion because in a village where educated people abound, religion will not have much faith in superstitions, ghosts and the like. Thinking about such matters becomes common in the absence of education. In much the same way transformation in rural religion as a result of modern scientific tendency is fairly evident because in areas which have progressed scientifically the introduction of the modern means of communication has led to a closer touch with science, the cumulative effect of which has been to dispel the clouds of ignorance and

superstition. Again, rural religion is not immune to the effects of economic conditions since, generally speaking, the poorer people as a class are more superstitious.

Dynamic Aspect of Rural Religion

In this way, it is necessary to keep an eye on its dynamic aspect if rural religion, as it is in India, is to be understood. In the present age, efforts are made to achieve progress in every sphere. In the villages of India, the efforts at progress are all embracing, encompassing the political, social and economic aspects. Education is spreading in the villages. With the increase in urbanization in the country, the villages are also being continuously transformed. Besides, the increase in rail, road and other travel facilities, has led to an increase in the mobility of the villagers, and the rural population is adopting the habit of travelling far and wide. The adventurous and ambitious young men of the villages travel to big cities to try their luck and, upon returning, tell their comparatively immobile and senile kinfolk about what they have seen. The radio serves to keep the village folk generally in touch with the major happenings of the world. In the exhibitions which are organised from time to time, they see novel things. All these things have their effect upon rural religion. One of the first effects of these influences is that they put an end to the beliefs in ghosts, witches, etc. and thoughts of superstitions and omens. Religion is sanskritized and modernised. Secondly, religiousness itself loses its grip on the individual, and faith is transferred to science from religion. But this does not lead to the utter annihilation of rural religion. Religiousness is a fundamental element of Indian culture. The villager of today still clings to tradition and he is no less religious than his ancestor despite the many and varied changes that intrude into his religious notions and beliefs.

The Village Temple

The village temple holds a very important place in the life of the village. It has, of course, its religious importance but in the village it also exerts ostensible influence upon the social sphere as

well. As a matter of fact, the temple in a village becomes the centre of public life. And even otherwise, the inseparability of rural religion from the life of the villager lends to the village temple an importance of its own.

Description of Rural Temple

Sometimes some property in one form or another is attached to the village temple, the income from which serves to meet the expenses of decoration, communal feeding and the livelihood of the priest or pundit. Some villages have more than one temple. In the villages in India, different temples are constructed for different deities. These temples differ somewhat in structure. Among the Indian gods, the more popular in the sense of the number of temples dedicated to them, are Mahavira or Hanuman and Mahadeva or Sankara. In a village where people have faith in different groups or schools of thought, the temples are dedicated to them so that in a village where people belong to the group of the followers of Shakti, the temple is also dedicated to Shakti while the same temple would have been dedicated to Shiva had the village been dominated by his followers. Besides these, one can see temples dedicated to many other female deities like Kalidevi, Saraswati Devi, Durga Devi, Sati Devi, etc., in a number of places. Wherever a woman sacrifices herself on the burning pier of her husband and some supernatural element is seen in her, a temple is erected in her honour and the other women in the village visit it from time to time to offer prayer. As a general rule, the local God also finds some place in the village but this place is more in the form of a sacred place than a temple.

Public and Private Temples

The rural temples are looked upon as community property and a particular family traditionally looks after it and performs the functions of the priest. But some temples are also private, as are the ones constructed by the rich landlords within the precincts of their own gardens. Commonly, the public temples are in no worse condition than those privately maintained, the former being visited by all the villagers. Formerly, members of lower or

untouchable castes were not permitted to enter them but since the anti-untouchability campaign and the declaration of the practice of untouchability as illegal the temples in most villages are open to all and sundry. But even then the people who perform menial tasks are generally prohibited from entering the temples. On the other hand the private temples are utilised by members of only one family though, as a general rule, no one is barred from worshipping in such temples.

Importance of the Priest in Village Life

The temple is not merely a place of worship. If the priest of the temple is an intelligent and learned person he has an important status and role in the village life. He becomes a respected leader of the village, to whom much importance is attached by the villagers who look upon him as a representative of God. Often his premonitions and forecasts have profound influence upon the thinking and conduct of the villagers. In this way the temple priest is an astrologer, prophet and doctor, conductor of prayers and storyteller, all at the same time. In these circumstances, the temple in the village has a comprehensive influence upon the life of the village, and instead of remaining merely a place of worship, the temple becomes an institution.

Religious Importance of the Temple

First and foremost, the temple has a religious importance. On almost all the major occasions of religious importance, festivals are held and the entire population of the village congregates in the temple to worship. In the temple an idol of God is placed. A Brahmin priest makes arrangements for the maintenance of the temple. He bathes the idol of God and worships it daily and at these times many of the villagers are present. After the prayers the priest distributes sweets among the predominantly adolescent audience. In addition to this daily routine special congregations are invited and organised for praying, at more or less regular intervals. Group discussions are also held. At the major festivals the idol is decorated, the attendance being more numerous and the distributed sweets being in greater quantity.

Social Importance of the Village Temple

As has been mentioned on a number of previous occasions the temple has importance for the life of the village from the social viewpoint also. The temple becomes a place for congregating when people from all the castes get together to take part in the occasion being celebrated at the temple. Through the medium of the temple people of different castes get an opportunity to meet each other. In this way the temple becomes a centre of social get-together. And at times, other than when the prayers are being conducted, old men and women can be seen gossiping, thus transforming the temple into a place for mutual relief of overwhelming thoughts and desires or some such thing. Sometimes even the most important meetings of the village are held in the temple, for it is a sacred and important place and is also spacious enough to accommodate many people. Many programmes for social welfare are conducted in the temples. Sometimes the temple is used as a medium for collecting funds in order to finance different kinds of public work in the village.

Moral Importance of the Temple

Besides its social and religious importance, the village temple is important from the moral viewpoint as well, because it is a symbol of the village morality and its religious fervour. Often the priest in the temple is called upon to pass judgment of good and bad in the moral problems which beset the villagers. This sort of thing has been carried very far because incidents are not completely lacking where a person considered guilty and worthy of punishment is released on the mere wish of the pundit on the ground that the priest is a religious and benevolent person whose words are invaluable.

Cultural Importance of the Temple

The cultural life of the village is also enriched by the temple. In the temple group devotional songs, and congregations for this purpose, are held. On such occasions all sorts of musical instruments are used. Dances are also arranged in the temple and are performed in front of the idol of God. This kind of practice is

particularly in vogue in the temples of South India. The temples which possess a fair amount of property are generally well and lavishly decorated. In this way, the temple has both artistic and cultural value.

There is yet another point of cultural importance of the temple. In the life of the rural people, many kinds of rituals are related to the temple. The marriage performed at the temple, be it publicly performed or secretly, is held to be sacred and inviolable. In many villages the marital rituals are performed in the village temple itself. On some sacred occasions the husband and the wife go together to visit the deity and to receive his blessing. In the temples, the wives and mothers propitiate respectively for their husbands and their children and make presents when their desires are fulfilled.

Educational Importance of the Temple

In ancient India the temples were educational centres as well and even today schools are held in many temples. Mostly the priest is the teacher. And this leads the people to believe that the education imparted by the priest to them will make them religious and moral. Besides the children the priest educates adult men and women also in various subjects. If the personality of the priest is magnetic and inspiring the villagers take their problems to him and accept the solutions which he suggests.

Recreational Importance of the Temple

The temples do not fall short of material for the recreation of the village people. Often gymnasia are attached to the village temple, because, for one, the temple is generally situated outside the village in a clean and open place and, for another, it is considered more beneficial to take exercise under the protection and benevolence of Gods like Hanuman than otherwise. Every now and then, competitions in wrestling are organised, the whole affair being characterised by a lot of fanfare and public acclaim. The arrangement for new programmes at regular intervals in the temple serves to relieve monotony and create variety, all of which serves to entertain the people.

The population of the Indian villages looks upon a person invested with the powers of meting out justice as a representative or a messenger from God. And for this reason, the village priest, in his part of a representative or messenger of God, is sometimes called upon to intervene in complicated cases and to do justice. In addition to doing justice the priest also prescribes the kind of penance which a person should do in order to remove the stains of sin done by him

Festivals of the Temple

The festivals of temple often take place at times when they can influence quite considerably the activity of agriculture. And because the festivals of the village generally coincide with these, the whole process attaches even more importance, for the villager, to the temple and makes it the actual symbol of the religious aspect of rural life. The result is that the temple thus becomes related to the general life of the village.

From the preceding description of the importance of the temple in rural life, it is evident that the temple contributes in an important way to each and every aspect of life which the villager leads. But with the advent of new thought and the influence of the town, which is making rural life secular the temple is losing its importance. Since the institution of zamindari has been abolished, the landlords can no longer afford the lavish expenditure they were accustomed to and the temples consequently suffer because of the discontinuation of grants and aid given by the landlord. But nevertheless, the villagers that retain their faith in religion still attach the old traditional importance to the village temple. Now India is a secular state but it would not be advisable to abolish or be careless towards the temple because it is not merely a place for religious practices but a centre of the various activities of village life. The need is for a slight transformation in the programmes organised in the temple.

Cultural Aspect of Rural Life

The present topic is devoted to only two important aspects of

rural cultural life, i.e., village festivals and *sanskars*. Festivals and celebrations have a great importance in Indian rural life and particularly in the Hindu community. It is an unlucky month in which the village people do not celebrate some festival or the other. Studies concerning these festivals have been made in various parts of India. In 1918, Mukerjee made a special study of the festivals of Bengal and Uttar Pradesh. In 1919, Gupta based an exposition concerning Indian festivals on his study of Bombay, Bengal and Madhya Bharat. Stevenson, in 1920, based his description on a study of Kathiyavar and Gujarat. It was Maharashtra which became the object of study in 1921 when Underhill undertook this task. Briggs in 1920 and Fuchs in 1951 made a study of individual tribal festivals. In 1958 Oscar Lewis presented a description of the festivals performed by the rural community in Rampura village, which he was studying. In the same year D.N. Majumdar studied the festivals of the community of Mohana village, in the course of a study. In this way, the Indian rural festivals have been studied from various sundry aspects all of which differ from each other in one way or another. The difference in rural festivals corresponds to the variations in caste, community, area of residence, culture, etc. And yet there are some festivals which are celebrated in different months. This is explained in the following table :

<i>Months</i>	<i>Festivals</i>
1. Magh (January-February)	1. Sakat 2. Makar Sankranti 3. Basant Panchami
2. Phalgun (February-March)	1. Holi 2. Shiv Ratri
3. Chaitra (March-April)	1. Worship of Jagannath 2. Ram Navami
4. Vaishakh (April-May)	1. Worship of Jagannath
5. Jyestha (May-June)	1. Dushehara of Jyestha
6. Ashad (June-July)	1. Assari
7. Shraavan (July-August)	1. Raksha Bandhan 2. Naag Panchami

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| 8. Bhadon (August-September) | 1. Janam Ashtami |
| | 2. Teej |
| 9. Kwarr (September-October) | 1. Vijaya Dasmi |
| | 2. Pitra Paksh |
| 10. Kartik (October-November) | 1. Karava Chaoth |
| | 2. Kartika Poornima |
| | 3. Dipaavali |
| | 4. Bhaiya Dooj |

All the villages in India do not celebrate these festivals in their entirety, but nevertheless, most of them are celebrated by the Indian villager. A brief description of those festivals now follows :

1. *Sakat* : Sakat is a festival celebrated to guard against catastrophies. On this occasion, the mothers of male children pray to Sakat Maharani to defend their children from evil. On the day on which this occasion occurs fried food is prepared. In the evening the Sakat Maharani is worshipped, following which the females take milk and fruits, but no grains.

2. *Makar Sankraanti* : This particular festival is celebrated every year on the 14th of January. On this particular morning every one rises and bathes early, in a river wherever possible. The food in the morning consists of rice and pulse, the fried food being taken with the evening meal. Presents of rice pudding, ghee, salt, etc. are made to the Brahmin. Among the lower castes, the members of the head's family and his relatives gather together and jointly partake of rice pudding known as *khichari*.

3. *Basant Panchami* : On panchami in the month of Magh, Basant Panchami is celebrated, it being the fifth (Panchami) day of Basant. On this day, prayers are addressed to the family God or to Shiva or to one of the other deities. In most villages there is a convention of donning yellow garbs on this day, but this practice can be seen in some villages which are near towns, since this convention is the result of the influence of the town.

4. *Holi* : It is the biggest festival of Hindus, falling on the day of the full moon in Phalgun. The day following is called Dhulandi. Long before the actual day young boys roam about the village and collect fire wood which they pile on the place reserved for the lighting of the bonfire on the occasion. The female popu-

lation make *bats* corresponding to round objects like sun, moon, etc., a week in advance. In the centre of every *bat* there is a hole, many of them being threaded together on to thin strings to make garlands. The time for lighting the holi is determined by the village priest. At the same time he discovers some letters, the people whose names begin with these letters being forbidden to take part in the proceedings. The time of lighting the fire is broadcast to the entire village. On this day, the houses in villages are given a proper wash and brush on. They need it. The walls are whitewashed and the floor cowdunged. Most of the persons buy a new outfit of clothes and shoes. At the appointed time, the entire village collects at the place. They take with them plants of barley. When the fire is to be lit, a particular person makes three rounds of the pile and then sets it alight. At the same time the assemblage roars in unison, "Holi Hai". The entire congregation then takes five or seven rounds of the fire and at every round people throw grains of barley at the fire of Holi, at the end of which five or seven garlands of *bats* are added to the blaze. On this occasion many people sing a folk song called Phag. Those who have been forbidden to take part in the activity or proceedings stand at a distance and look on. At some places after the communal circling of the fire the younger people touch the feet of their elders and utter "Rama Rama". At other places the same words are intoned whenever someone meets another member of family.

The day following Holi is called Dhulandi and is a day of even more vigorous enjoyment and pleasure. On this day the villagers give their animals a bath and make an imprint of their hand on animal's back. After the sun has come out, colour is thrown at each other. At present in some villages this part of the festival is restricted to adolescents, but in most villages age is not considered any disqualification, and every one takes part heartily. Often the fun makers fall into a group which tours the village, one of them distinguishing himself by acting the part of a clown. It is not uncommon for these people to be intoxicated. This group visits every place in the village, the people making an infernal din all the while. This occasion carries with it a licence, accepted by

convention, for all sorts of uncouth remarks, no one taking umbrage when made the butt of joke. Uncouth remarks are passed without any consideration of propriety. Some people dance along with the group, accompanied by others singing *phag* or other songs. The children use syringes, of a most unclinical size and shape, to project coloured water over a fair distance upon the merry makers. The grown up people keep to drier modes of disfiguration. Some inconsiderate barbarians sling mud and not of the proverbial variety either, besides coaltar and such things, but such practice is generally looked down upon and considered bad. It is thought good to let bygones be bygones and to be friendly once again on this occasion. The colour throwing is generally stopped at noon; the people don their new garments in the evening and visit one another at this time to convey their good wishes. Generally people belonging to the lower castes visit their social superiors, there being some more group singing in the same vein at this time as well. Most of the people visit members of their own caste. Meeting each other, they embrace joyfully. But on meeting a member of a higher caste a verbal greeting is considered adequate. On this day all activities are restricted to those appropriate for the occasion, no other work being done.

5. *Shiva Ratri*: The festival of Shiva Ratri is celebrated in Phalgun. As is obvious from its name, this day is reserved for worship of Shiva during which flowers of *dhatura* and other materials are put on the idol of Shiva. After the prayer sweets are distributed in the Shiva temples. Some people fast on the day of Shiva Ratri, but even upon breaking the fast, they still abstain from grains. The women worship Shiva within the confines of the house. On this day too, some people bathe in the Ganges and collective singing of devotional songs is carried on.

6. *Worship of Jagannath*: Although the idol of Jagannath ji is established in the famous Jagannath temple at Puri, yet the worship of Jagannath is carried on in Chait or Baisakh in most Indian villages. It is believed that the worship of Jagannath may lead to prosperity. People from every corner of the country make devotional journeys to Puri and on returning from this pilgrimage they take back with them pictures of Jagannath. After this pilgrim-

mage the people do not have to make annual offerings to the dead ancestors, since it is believed that, with the blessings of Jagannath, the desires of the ancestors will be satiated. On this day, too, the house is given a thorough cleaning and scrubbing. Fried food is taken in the morning. The worship of Jagannath consists in the recital of his story and offering of prayers to his picture. As a general rule only the married women worship Jagannath, fast on the particular day and restrict their diet to mere cold drinks. It is believed that the worship of Jagannath is conducive to the welfare of the members of the family.

7. *Dushehara of Jaith* : As is obvious from the name given to this festival, it falls in the month of Jaith. On this day some people fast and offer water in the temple of Mahadeva, while the members of lower castes do the same at the supposed residence of the local deity.

8. *Asaari* : The festival of Asaari falls in the month of Assar. On this day the higher castes have their diet from amongst fried food and fruits while the lower or inferior castes eat vegetables and roots, etc. It is mainly a women's festival. Hence, the women pray to the Goddess. The newly wed women accompany their husbands when the latter visit the temple. Men and women draw lines of cowdung on the walls of their houses, believing thereby to have gained immunity from an invasion by the snake. The children get their heads shaved while the adult women take this opportunity to visit their parent's residence. It is believed that, as a result of worship, the Goddess fulfills the desires of women concerning their sons and husbands.

9. *Raksha Bandhan* : The festival is one of major importance among the Hindus. On this day, sisters tie colourful *Raakhis* on the right wrists of their brothers and give them sweets, and the brothers return the sentiment by giving some present or money to their sisters. The *Raakhi* is the symbol of the protection which a brother offers to his sister. In the village it is not only a sister who ties a *Raakhi* on the wrist of the brother but even members of the lower castes do the same to the people of higher castes. The brahmins of the village also tie *Raakhis* to the people of other castes, getting money or food in return. If a long distance separates a sister from her brother *Raakhi* is sent to him

by post or by any other means at hand. The brother also conveys his feelings and concrete token as best as he can. On this day the girls are seen almost bursting with enthusiasm. They paint their palms and sing traditional songs on the swings.

10. *Naag Panchami* : On the occasion of Naag Panchami, the snake God is worshipped. This day falls on the fifth (panchami) of Saavan. On this day the people wash themselves, and carrying milk, rice pudding, etc. make a beeline for whatever place they consider to be a possible snake hole. There they pray, and leaving their rice, etc. they return. After the prayer is over they themselves take food. In fact, it is not the worship of the snake God which is the most important, but the pride of place, in this respect, goes to the wrestling competitions organised on the day. The wrestling matches are held within the village and sometimes people from other villages are also invited. No distinction of caste is allowed in wrestling. If age and weight agree contestants are allowed to wrestle. Men of all ages, varying from children to old people take part. Any person desirous of wrestling steps into the ring and challenges the congregation. Whoever accepts the challenge walks in the ring and, weight and age permitting, the two get on with it. The wrestlers are also given prizes by the spectators. Often the oldest and most prominent members of the community perform the function of judges. All the time the wrestling is going on, a menial plays on the drum to the tune of "pick him up and sling him", or some similar tune. Besides the wrestling, people make most of the occasion and thrash old dolls after the wrestling is over. On this day, one girl from every family goes to the predetermined spot, taking a doll along with her. All the dolls are collected at one place and are thrashed by boys of every caste. The girls also distribute fried nuts to the boys. The married girls go to their parents on this particular day and if they cannot come, their parents send them money and clothes in the form of presents. On this occasion, the swing is in great demand and so are the songs appropriate to the occasion and its spirit. On this day most people take fried food. The festival of Naag Panchami is of great importance for village life.

11. *Janam Ashtami* : The festival of Janam Ashtami is cele-

brated to commemorate the birth of the revered God Sri Krishna. It is a matter of belief that Lord Krishna was born on the day of Ashtami in the month of Bhaadon. On this day, men and women keep a fast lasting till midnight, when they celebrate the birth of Lord Krishna. After offering their prayers and receiving the Lord's blessings and sweets the people break their fast. On this day some people construct monumental scenes in their homes depicting events related to Lord Krishna's life. But more often a Ramdol is constructed, in the house of a prominent and influential person of the village, and an idol of the Lord is placed in the Ramdol. People of every caste collect in front of this Ramdol and sing devotional songs. The entire village makes contributions towards the expense incurred in the construction of the Ramdol and in buying or preparing sweets. This singing continues till midnight, when the priest prays to God. For his troubles, he is presented with some money. After the prayer sweets are distributed. The Ramdol stays with the important person for three days after which the barber takes it round the village, accompanied by the priest. Everyone makes some cash presents. Of the entire amount collected the priest takes three fourths while the barber gets the remaining one fourth. In some places the custom is to deposit the Ramdol at some particular spot, after it has been taken round the village, and to enact scenes from Lord Krishna's life.

12. *Teej* : Teej is primarily a festival for the women folk. Both married and unmarried girls wear colourful clothes, sing what is known as the *Kajri*, and pray. Worship of Mahadeva on the occasion of Teej is considered to be good for women for married life. Only fried food is taken. The girls take their food after they have prayed.

13. *Vijaya Dashami* : Vijaya Dashami or Dushehara, no less than Holi and Diwali, is an important festival for the Hindus. It is celebrated in remembrance of the occasion when Rama triumphed over Ravana. Durga is also worshipped on this day. Durga is worshipped with a lot of pomp and splendour in the villages of Bengal. Ten days before the occasion of Vijaya Dashami, Ram

Lila is started in the bigger villages, at some places the whole life of Rama being enacted on the stage in the form of a drama. On the day of Dushehara, big fairs are held at certain places in the big villages, where big effigies of Ravana, his brother Kumbhakaran and son Megh Nada, are prepared in paper and erected at a public place. At a fixed time in the evening, these are set fire to. The festival also occasions universal excitement and enthusiasm in village life.

14. *Pitra Paksh* : Pitra Paksh is the occasion for a fortnight of worship of one's deceased ancestors. It takes place in the first half of the month of Kwaar in which no sexual pleasure is permitted and besides, water is offered in addition to other sacrifices demanded by religion. In *Shraadh*, the priest and the barber are particularly important. In the *shraadh* feast the relatives also take part besides the Brahmins. Presents are also given to these people. Almost all the castes among the Hindus observe this occasion.

15. *Karava Chaoth* : The festival of Karava Chaoth is observed by women as it assures longevity and over-all welfare of their husbands. On this day women maintain a total fast abstaining even from drinking water. After perceiving the moon and worshipping it, they break their vigil.

16. *Kartika Poornima* : This festival falls on the day of the full moon in the month of Kartika. On these days, very big fairs are organised along the banks of the Ganges where people proceed in their millions by whatever means of transportation they can manage to acquire. On the particular day people bathe early in the Ganges and worship Mahadeva.

17. *Diwali* : The festival of Diwali is quite as important, if not more so than festivals of Holi and Dushehara. In most villages Diwali is celebrated with a lot of pomp and majesty, and it, too, like Holi, is spread over two days. The first day is called small Diwali and the second day the bigger Diwali. It is the festival of lights, small earthen-ware pots called "deep" being filled with oil and lighted through a wick. The day is festive in remembrance of Shri Ram Chandra's return to Ayodhya after having spent fourteen years in exile. Some of the "deeps" are filled with ghee instead of oil, and are placed at the place of worship.

Fried food is prepared this day. The children buy toys made of sugar while the older people buy small busts of the various Gods like Ganesha, Lakshmi, etc., for these Gods are to be worshipped. Before the Diwali day dawns, the houses have gone through the ordeal of another thorough wash and brush up. The actual festival falls on the second day. Besides the lights, a good amount of fire crackers are also set off, by the children particularly. The confectioners make toys of sugar, which are eaten with kheer. The festival of Diwali is understood to augment prosperity. Many people gamble throughout the night on this occasion and stay awake till midnight, and even after, because it is a traditional belief that Lakshmi, the Goddess of wealth, enters the house at this time and she is apt to turn back if she finds the doors barred. Some people worship Lakshmi while others worship books and pens. In the temples ghee is burnt to give light. The entire village gets a thorough cleaning.

18. *Bhaiya Dooj*: The day following Diwali is an occasion for another festival, called Bhaiya Dooj. This is especially a sister's affair since it is meant and celebrated for the welfare and good health of the brothers. On this day, the sisters make a mark with saffron and stick some rice on their brothers' fore-heads and give some sweets to eat. The brothers also give presents to their sisters.

Story of Satya Narayan

It is a tradition in the North Indian villages to hear the story of Satya Narayan on all festive occasions, over and above the special programme set aside for the occasion. It is told by a priest, and neighbours and relatives, in addition to the members of the family, take part. The recitation takes a fairly long time. In this recitation stories are told about the importance attached to the worship of Satya Narayan, all of which convey the meaning that worship of Satya Narayan, and listening to his stories can ward off many catastrophies. After the recital, prayers are offered and people make cash presents which they put in the ceremonial plate. The cash is pocketed by the priest besides which he is given food and some more cash by the host after the prayers are over.

Profanation of a Festival

The Hindu people look upon a day of festival as sacred. If some person dies in the family on a day of festivity, that particular festival is not celebrated any more in the family since it has been robbed of its sanctity. But if in future, a son is born in the family on the same day its profanation is wiped out and its sanctity redeemed, and it is once again celebrated.

Religious Importance of Festivals

Festivals have a lot of importance in Indian rural life. The greatest importance is attached from the religious point of view. As is obvious from the foregoing description of the festivals, they are as much occasions for prayer and worship as for enjoyment. Different Gods and Goddesses are worshipped. Benevolence and pity also come to the forefront on these festive occasions and people give alms to the poor and feed them. On the day of the festival the people bathe and keep themselves pure, even preventing bad and base thoughts from entering their minds. On occasions of festivity religious meetings are organised, devotional songs are sung collectively. The spiritual atmosphere seems to pervade everything, and there is a stream of people coming from and going to the temples.

Social Importance of the Festivals

But, the social importance of the festivals perhaps surpasses their religious importance. On the occasion of festivals people of different castes meet each other, and this helps to reduce the tension existing between them. People belonging to the same classes visit each other's houses and on the occasion of Holi even embrace each other. This serves to strengthen the organisational fabric of the society. And, on many festivals, even personal grievances are forgotten. On the occasion of Holi, for example, people forget their grievances and embrace each other in a spirit of mutual well-being a practical exposition of the proverb let bygones be bygones, which advocates ignoring of old misunderstandings and living a life of love and cooperation in the future. On the occasion of major festivals like Holi and Dushehara, the ceremonies of the festivals are

directed along communal lines. This develops the community consciousness among the people and strengthens the organisation of the village. On many occasions of festivity, girls and boys, besides other near relatives, gather in one house. It increases their regard for one another. The festivals serve as an excuse for the parents to call their wedded daughters home again, and these married women also get an excuse for meeting their relatives once in a while. In this way, the festivals accord people, whether they are relatives, members of different castes or belonging to different classes in society, an opportunity for increasing mutual contacts and understanding. On these occasions, the work of organising and arranging for these festivals in public falls to the lot of the head of the village. It serves to maintain his leadership.

Recreation through Festivals

Festivals are occasions for merrymaking. A lot of excitement and enthusiasm is in the air when festivals like Holi, Diwali and Dushehara are approaching. People wear new clothes on these auspicious days. They take the day off from their work and get a change to have some rest and introduce a bit of much needed variety into their humdrum life, which refreshes them like water does a withering plant. The festivals are very important from the recreational point of view, as every festival does include some aspect which provides recreation to people. On Dushehara the dramatic societies perform for ten days, while on the occasion of Diwali the people put on many lights and explode crackers. On Naag Panchami wrestling matches are held and the dolls given a thorough thrashing. In the month of Saavan, people use the swings and sing to their heart's content whenever there is some festival afoot. On the occasion of Holi, there could hardly be more recreation than when the colours are flying in the air. People dance with pleasure. From the psychological point of view, occasions like Holi have their importance because they are an opportunity for the people to give expression to their various tendencies, all of which make it easier for them to keep their mental balance to cooperate with each other. The different games arranged on the occasion of festivals are meant to allow boys and girls to meet and

to express their mental tendencies in various ways. Besides, the people get the opportunity to dress properly because on the normal days their activities are such as to prohibit the use of any new clothes and ornaments. Something more sober and utilitarian is then demanded. In consequence, the people justifiably dress in their best clothes and roam about during festivals. A lot of jokes and familiarity are tolerated on these occasions. On many festivals, the men and women get an opportunity to meet each other.

Aesthetic Importance of Festivals

In addition to this, the festivals are important from the cultural view point. In India, on such occasions, artistic figures are drawn on the floors, and the walls. Many kinds of things are made from cowdung. The house is cleaned and the things arrayed in new form. On the Janam Ashtami festival, the glimpses of the life of Krishna are very artistically presented. And when the Ramlila is dramatised, the actors are the ingenious villagers themselves. Folk music is almost an inseparable part of festivity. Many musical instruments are used to provide accompaniment to collective devotional singing. Community singing and community dancing increase the community consciousness of the villagers, in addition to maintaining a high level of cultural activity and cultural environment.

Place of Festivals in Rural life

From the foregoing description of festivals, it is obvious that they bear a close relation to the season and various activities characteristic of agriculture. In this way, the festivals become a normal part of the life in the village. Actually, the festivals are those occasions when the villagers, having seen to their business and agricultural responsibilities, express natural joy and enthusiasm in welcoming a new season, being filled with renewed vigour for the work they are to tackle in this season. The poor people benefit in great measure on these festive occasions. Often, they are enabled to store food grains which they can consume over a number of days. And besides, they sometimes receive gifts of money and clothes. The people who benefit most on these occasions are the

brahmins or the priests, who get work to do, as well as receive presents, in food and cash. In this way, the festivals are instrumental in reducing the economic inequality and satisfying many of the needs of the poor.

It is obvious from the preceding delineation of the importance of festivals in rural life that they are valuable not merely from the religious viewpoint, but also from other viewpoints like social, recreational, health, sanitary, cultural development, etc. The festivals manifest the inner core of villagers and enhance the life force.

Rural Sanskaras

Number of Sanskaras

In comparison with urban life, changes in rural life are few and far between. It is for this reason that while only a few rudiments of Indian culture are found in the towns, they are to be found operative in almost all their splendour and untarnished glory in the rural life. Religious rituals are by far the most important in Indian culture. From the time when he is conceived to the time when death, the mighty leveller, marks an end to his frailty and weakness, his power and glory, his pain and pleasure, the life of man has been tied in a chain of *sanskaras*. The number of these *sanskaras* is yet undecided, all the scriptures and commentators upon religious texts holding divergent opinions. Some believe them to be twelve in number while others count them at eleven. Manu places the number of *sanskaras* at thirteen. These are as given below :

1. *Garbhadhan*, 2. *Jaatkarma*, 3. *Naamkaran*, 4. *Nishkramana*
5. *Annaprashana*, 6. *Choorakarma*, 7. *Upanayana*, 8. *Keshaanta*,
9. *Sammavartana*, 10. *Vivaha*, 11. *Vaanprastha*, 12. *Sanyaasa*,
13. *Antyeshti*.

Ashvalaayan has counted another two beside these, *Punsavana* and *Simaantonayana*. Sushrut has prescribed yet another *Karnavedha*, making the total number of *Sanskaras* sixteen. But in rural life, the Hindus do not observe all these sixteen *sanskaras*. According to the census of 1901, twelve of these rituals were prevalent among the Hindus, and these too have slipped into oblivion one after another as time passed. The first ones to go down the path of

oblivion were those which could boast of nothing more than a remote relation which they bore to the natural activities of rural life. Of those prevailing today the most prominent are those concerning birth, death and marriage. But some of the others, e.g., *Simaantonnyana*, *naamkaran*, *choorakarma*, and *upanayana* are also still observed. Beside these *sanskaras* the women folk of the village also believe in some *negtehalas* which do not necessitate the presence of a priest, the women being quite capable of doing the praying themselves. Various kinds of songs are sung along with these *tebalas* but they are not devotional songs of the common variety. They are sung only for prosperity.

Sanskaras related to Birth

Concerning birth, four rituals are observed in the villages :

1. *Saadha*, 2. *Prasava*, 3. *Chathi*, 4. *Kooan Pujan* and *Naamkarana*
Songs are sung on all these occasions. They are further described below :

1. *Saadha* : This ritual is performed in the seventh month of pregnancy. In vedic literature, it has been called *Simaantonnyana*. The *Simaantonnyana sanskara* is prescribed for observation in the fourth month, but the *saadha* ritual is observed in the seventh month. In the village it is also called *saadha paherana*. According to this *sanskara*, once it is known that a woman is pregnant, she has to observe certain rules of conduct which continue till the *saadha* is donned. Among the restrictions is the one that prevents the pregnant woman from wearing new clothes and new bangles besides some particular cosmetics like vermilion. And five to seven days before the performance of this ritual, she is forbidden any form of decoration and even bathing.

When the priest decides the day for the ritual, the parents of the pregnant woman are informed, who send her new clothes, fruits, dry fruits, sweets, etc. On the particular day, a drawing is made with flour on the floor, and two low benches are placed on it, on which are seated the woman and her husband. The priest recites verses and the women perform rituals and take the pair into another room where the two are given sweets to eat. During the performances, flour cakes numbering seven, nine or eleven are

placed in the lap of the pregnant woman. They are called *aas*. They symbolise the fact that the woman can now hope for a porogeny. This tradition of the Indian villages is a good example of what Frazer calls Homeopathic magic.

2. *Prasava (delivery)* : Next, after the *saadha* in the cycle of birth, is the *prasava* time. In this case too, the Gods and Goddesses are worshipped, seeking favour for a safe delivery. If it is a male child, his arrival is announced by banging a plate or by firing a gun. The priest is called in and a *janam lagan* made. On the first day, the child is given *aqua ptycatis* mixed with crude sugar. He is given milk the next day. On the right and left of the place where delivery has taken place, *Satiya* made of cowdung are placed with coal. The old women of the village present what is known as *Chana*, which is a receptacle like an earthen pot. On this too, lines of cow-dung and *satiya* are made. In this the water of *battisa* is prepared for the woman. At the same time, certain activities are instituted to protect the woman and her infant child from ghosts and witches. For this reason, the child is never left alone. Fire is kept burning continuously in the delivery home and no one is permitted to enter from the outside. In particular, cats are prevented from entering the place. A knife is placed beside the child's head. To announce the arrival of the son, a barber takes a cake of gur and one and a quarter of a rupee, and goes to the mother's parents who in turn send the appropriate requisites on the occasion of *chatbi* and *chochak*.

3. *Chatbi* : The ritual of *chatbi* is observed almost everywhere, in the towns in particular where it is the most important ritual after birth. In this ritual both the child and the mother are purified. Both the mother and the child take bath for the first time on the sixth day after the delivery. The threshold of the delivery room is decorated with some food-grains, gur, etc., and both are brought out together. This particular work of bringing the two out falls to the mother's younger brother-in-law. Having made her visit to the outside world, the mother returns to the room and sits near the bed on the side on which the head rests, on the ground and worships

something called *bai* made by the midwife. A silver *bansali* is placed near the foot of the bed, beside which some grain is placed and oil lamp lit. Near this, four cakes of wheat flour, rice and sugar are placed. After some ritual, these four cakes are given to the midwife. The *bai* is worshipped by sprinkling it with water mixed with haldi, a spice. After this day the mother is allowed to consume foodgrains. The soot is collected and put in the eyes of the child. The child is not allowed to see the light of this lamp. The entire process on this particular day is meant as a precaution against ghosts and witches which may otherwise possess the child and its mother.

4. *Kooanpujan and Naamkaran* : On the tenth day after birth, the *Kooanpujan* and *Naamkaran sanskaras* are performed. On this day, the priest is called in early and he does what is known as *yajna*. The mother takes the child in her lap and sits on a wooden stool. On her side sits either one of the older male members of the family or her husband. The priest performs the *yajna* and extracts the child's name. Generally, the child is addressed by a name other than this but sometimes this name is used. After the name has been elicited the richer people give a dinner to all and sundry while the poorer give a dinner to their friends and the priest. The visitors bring presents for the child in cash or in kind. The mother takes a bath on this day and the *nayin* oils her head. This is her third bath after the delivery. The second bath after *chatbi* is between *chatbi* and *jasootan* or *namakaran*. After the delivery during the one and a quarter month of purification, she takes five baths. The fourth, after the *jasootan*, can be taken on any day except Tuesdays, Saturdays and Sundays. The same is true for the fifth bath. Sometimes all these five baths are taken within three weeks. On the day of the fifth bath the mother puts sugar in five places in the names of five Gods like Sitala, Zaahar, Meera, Hanuman etc. The *Satiyas* are placed in a basket. The place where they had been originally placed is cleaned up and *satiyas* of haldi are put in their place. The mother wears new clothes and carries to the well a pot full of water in which there is a mango plant. The basket of *satiyas* is carried by her sisters-in-law. The mother then cleans a small space

on the parapet of the well and makes five *satiyas* of haldi on which she places some rice; these are worshipped by throwing some haldi water on them. These *satiyas* are then either wetted or sowed near the well. On returning home, the coals on both sides of the main door are cooled by throwing water on them, and thus doubling the difficulties in the way of wicked witches, or so it is believed. A small *satiya* of haldi is sewed on to the mother's bedsheet. The mother goes to the child only after she has shaken her clothes over the fire. Before taking the child from his grandfather's lap where she had left it when going to the well for worship, the mother gives *neg* to the grandfather. During *kooan-pujan* various songs are recited.

5. *Annaprashan Sanskara*: This comes after the *namkaran sanskara*. On any auspicious day the child is made to lick milk and rice pudding from a silver utensil with a silver spoon. After the ceremony is over the silver spoon and vessel is handed over to the child's aunt along with some more presents. Sometimes some people also invite friends and relatives to dinner. This ritual is also called *choorakarma*.

6. *Mundana Sanskara*: This follows the *annaprashan sanskara*. Some people perform it at home, but it is desirable, if possible, to perform it on the banks of the Ganges. As usual, a lot of singing accompanies the performance of the ritual.

7. *Karnacheddan Sanskara*: This *Sanskara* is next in the chain of rituals. According to Sushrut, the *Karnacheddan Sanskara* should be performed in the sixth or seventh month whereas Saint Katyayana prefers it in the third or fifth year. So the people compromise by doing it when they think fit. On the day of *Karnacheddan*, the child's maternal uncle sends new clothes and gold ear-rings but poor people use some alloys instead of gold.

8. *Upanayana Sanskara*: Upanayana follows the *Karnacheddan sanskara*, it being now performed, though not always, on marriage. According to *Manusmriti*, a person is deemed an untouchable without it. On this occasion the youth begs for alms, the first to comply being his mother followed by the other relatives. A dot of *kesar* is applied to the boy's forehead and the alms dropped in his outspread cloth.

The other important rituals are the marriage and *antyeshti sanskara* which have been described in an earlier chapter on marriage.

The Village Panchayat

The organisation, administration and all kinds of progress of the rural communities in India, is based on village *panchayats*. The village *panchayats* are the pillars which support the Indian rural social system.

Village Panchayats of Ancient India

In India in the vedic age there was a panchayat in every village. According to K.M. Pannikkar, this is the single permanent basis on which every dynasty of ancient Indian history has prospered. On this subject Dr. Altekar has pointed out that these *gram panchayats* worked for the defence of the village and collected the revenue of the State. They imposed new taxes, arbitrated in the disputes of the villagers and implemented the projects for public welfare. Through public loans these *panchayats* made arrangements for alleviating the distress caused by famines and other calamities. They also organised and established schools, orphanages and colleges and did much cultural and religious work through the temples. With the exception of declaring war and entering into treaty, these *panchayats* were vested with all the rights and authorities of the State.

According to a 10th century text, *Shukra Neetisara*, the ancient village *panchayat* had the following characteristics :

1. The members of village *panchayats* were elected.
2. The members had the rights of the Executive as well as the Judiciary.
3. The members were held in due respect.
4. The *panchayats* collected the tax on the land and controlled its distribution.
5. The pastures of the village and other forest land were treated as the property of the *panchayat*.
6. The *panchayats* also undertook such activities like maintenance of peace, security, health, education and public works.
7. The *panchayats* also mediated between warring factions of the villages.

In the village in ancient India the entire population elected the

members of the *panchayat*. Certain manuscripts discovered in south India throw light on their electoral procedure and functions. The manuscripts found in the village of North Maroor of Chingalpet district in south India show that the members of the village executive were elected by casting vote. In the North Maroor village there were thirty wards. In these wards the names of many people were proposed for the membership of the executive. The name of each candidate was written on a piece of paper and the names of all candidates in any ward, similarly written, were put in some vessel. Then some innocent child was asked to pick up any one piece of paper. The piece of paper which the child selected carried the name of the representative of that ward. This kind of election did not give any opportunity for propaganda, party politics or bias.

Village Republic

The British named these ancient *panchayats* of India as village republics. These *panchayats* had the right to nullify any excessive, improper or new taxes imposed by the king. They collected the revenue from the public and thus the king too did not interfere in their working but rather listened to them. Sir Charles Metcalf has written that these *panchayats* had all the characteristics of a republic. Every village was a small independent country. It was completely free from external control. Traditions and values which have disappeared from elsewhere have been protected in the village. The organisation of the *panchayats* of the village was such that every village was like a small independent nation. Considering the high degree of their independence, self dependence and prosperity, we can well understand the importance of the *panchayats*.

Panchayats under British Rule

Although the British had high praise for the *panchayats*, during British rule the rural *panchayats* of India started disintegrating for a number of reasons. Under the British, the state revenue was collected from the individual and not from the village as a whole. The work of collecting revenue was also taken away from the *panchayats* and handed over to Government officials. Law and order in the village came under the authority of the police. This

served to reduce further the rights and responsibility of the *panchayats*. Civil and criminal cases were now dealt with in the official courts. As a result the *panchayats* were deprived of their judicial rights. Due to increasing industrialisation and urbanisation, the rural community disintegrated; the consequence of this was the disintegration of the *panchayat* organisation. The influence of western civilisation resulted in the strengthening of the individualistic tendency and the weakening of communal feeling. The *panchayats* were no longer respected.

Long before India became independent, some attention was given to the reconstruction of rural communities. The Royal Commission on Decentralisation of 1909, laid particular emphasis upon the fact that the *panchayats* should be organised and developed in order to establish local self-government in the villages. In 1915 a bill was passed and instructions were issued to the provincial government that full efforts should be made to initiate *panchayats* in the villages, through cooperation. In the Act of 1919 special emphasis was laid on the same policy. Following this Village Panchayat Acts were passed in different provinces, in 1919 in west Bengal, in 1920 in Bombay, Central province and U.P. After this the Government of Assam, Orissa, Bihar, Travancore Cochin, Punjab, Mysore, Baroda and Indore followed suit and passed Village Panchayat Acts.

Panchayat in Free India

But while the British Rule lasted, these Acts did not succeed in reorganising village *panchayats*. When India became independent the native Government paid special attention to this aspect. Mahatma Gandhi used to say that freedom should start from the grass roots. Every village should be a small republic with comprehensive rights vested in it. Provision has been made in the Indian Constitution that the Government will organise the village *panchayats* and give them all the rights so that they may be in a position to function as units of *Swarajya*. After independence, the State Governments have made efforts and established *Gram Sabhas*, independent village *panchayats* and *panchayati adalats* (courts) in the villages of India.

(a) *Gram Sabha* : A *Gram Sabha* has been established in those villages whose population exceeds 1000. Where the population of the village falls short of this number several neighbouring villages have been combined to constitute *Gram Sabhas*. In case of villages more than three miles apart, they have the right to form individual *sabhas* even though their population may be less than 1000. All individuals who have the capability of being members and who are also the permanent residents of the area of the *Gram Sabha* will be its members. In order to be eligible for membership both males and females should have attained the age of 21 years. But lepers, insane people, bankrupt persons, those who have served a sentence and those who are Government officials cannot be members of the village *sabha*. If the person does not suffer from any of these disabilities and continues to reside within the area of the *sabha*, he can be its member as long as he lives. The *gram sabha* meets twice in the year, once during the Rabi crop season and again during the Kharif crop season. From among the members of the *sabha* one Chairman and one Vice Chairman are elected. Their term of office is three years. The *gram sabha* plans all the programmes for development, members of the *gram sabha* can oust the Chairman and the Vice Chairman by a two-thirds majority. The *gram panchayat* actively weilds the power of the *gram sabha*. It imposes taxes and incurs expenditure only if approved by the *gram sabha*.

(b) *Village Panchayat* : The executive constituted by the *Gram Sabha* for the management of the village is called the *Gram Panchayat*. The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the *Gram Sabha* are also the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the village *Panchayat*. The election of the members of the village *panchayat* and the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the *Gram Sabha* is carried out by a system analogous to the Cumulative Vote System. The polling officer appointed by the District Magistrate counts the votes indicated by show of hands by the voters.

It will be the duty of every *Gram panchayat* to arrange for the following things within the area of its authority as far as its funds allow.

1. *Maintenance of public roads* : Constructing public roads,

repairing them, maintaining them in good condition and arranging for their lighting and cleaning.

2. *Arrangement for water* : To construct public wells, tanks and wells for drinking, bathing and washing clothes ; to improve and to maintain them in good condition and to keep control over the means of obtaining drinking water. To maintain the water drains and places for drinking water in good condition and to look after them.

3. *Medical treatment and health* : To arrange for the care of pregnant women and their delivery, to provide medical aid and to enforce preventive measures against infectious diseases and maintain sanitary conditions.

4. *Education* : To open schools for the primary education of boys and girls and to maintain them.

5. *Statistics* : To maintain a register of vital statistics and marriages and to acquire detailed information about such other items as animal census, population census, as are required by law.

6. *Progress of agriculture and cottage industries* To assist in the progress of agriculture, business and cottage industries and to determine the place for collecting manure. To look after the Kaiser-e-Hind forests and class two of the mountain ranges in Kumaun division. To provide public pastures, to maintain them and look after and arrange for them. Without infringing the 1930 U.P. Act for exhibitions, to control those exhibitions, markets and fairs which are in their areas, and which do not include the exhibitions, markets and fairs, organised by Government.

7. *Control of buildings* . To protect, to maintain in good condition and to look after these buildings placed under the protection of Gram panchayat and other such property and the building of the Gram Sabha. To lay down rules for the construction of new buildings and transformation or extension of the existing buildings.

8. *Sanitation and security* : To maintain security in the villages. To make proper arrangement for the disposal of the dead bodies of human beings, animals as well as other foul smelling things. In the event of fire, to help in putting out the fire and saving the lives and property of the people.

9. *Administration* : To prevent the placing, constructing or

throwing of any improper object on public roads, public places and the property of the Gram Sabha and to arrange for criminal and civil judicial procedure. To elect the Panchas for Panchayati Courts.

10. *Other activities* : Besides these activities the panchayat can carry out the following activities for the benefit of the village : planting trees, improving the breed of animals, covering dirty drains, organising volunteer groups, establishing cooperative societies, arranging for public radios, lectures and exhibitions, etc.

(C) *Panchayati Adalat (Rural Court)* : Generally there is one Panchayati Adalat consisting four or five representatives from each Gram Sabha. In every Panchayati adalat there are five representatives from each Gram Sabha. These representatives are elected by direct vote system. In this way there are twenty or twenty five panchas. One Sarpancha is elected from among these panchas. His period of office lasts three years. For every case, a committee of five is elected, of which the Sarpancha is the Chairman. Of these five panchas one pancha necessarily belongs to that place from which the case comes. The judgment on the case is decided by majority. The decisions of the panchayat court are final and no appeal can usually be made against them but in the special cases one can appeal to the Munsif or the Hakim Paragana.

Similarities in Ancient and Modern Panchayats

The following similarities of ancient and modern panchayats become evident from a comparative study of them.

1. Both in ancient and modern panchayats the members are elected.

2. The duties for making arrangements for education, security, health, public construction, peace, protection of pastures, public roads and water etc., are found equally in ancient and modern panchayats.

3. In the same way the ancient and modern panchayats also have parallel rights, e.g. right over the pastures of the village and other public lands, the right to decide of civil and criminal conflict, the right to spend money in the activities of public welfare etc.

4. The objectives of both the modern and the ancient panchayats are similar. Both have been desirous of achieving peace, security, prosperity, happiness and self dependence in the village

5. The basis of modern panchayats is community feeling, which was also the basis of ancient panchayats. Both depend upon the cooperation of the villagers.

Difference between Ancient and Modern Panchayats

The following differences become evident in a comparative study of ancient and modern panchayats :

1. The major difference between the ancient and modern panchayats is in regard to the extent of Government intervention. In ancient India the activity of the village panchayats were free of any Government intervention and instead, the panchayats themselves sometimes contradicted the orders of the Government. At their request the king would make a reduction in the tax and would even completely forego it. In the modern village panchayats the Government officials do interfere. The panchayat inspector, panchayat officer and panchayat director are ordered to check the activities of the panchayats. Unless the panchayat inspector gives his consent the budget for the Gram Sabha, panchayati adalat or Gram Panchayat cannot be passed or finalised. The Government reserves the right of not only looking into the affairs of the panchayat but also the right to disband them altogether. The panchayat officer can prevent any action which is liable to disrupt peace or to injure the interests of the public. In this way the village panchayats of ancient India were completely independent whereas the modern panchayats are controlled by the Government.

2. The second difference between the ancient and the modern panchayat is with regard to the collection of State revenue whereas the village panchayat of ancient India collected the State revenue and passed it on to the king, the modern panchayat performs no such function.

3. With the progress of time the village panchayats of modern India have been entrusted with some new duties like making arrangements for public radios, meetings, speeches, exhibitions, cooperative societies, self dependent groups etc.

Role of Panchayats in Rural Reconstruction

The reconstruction of rural life in India depends upon the village panchayats. The economic, social and political reconstruction

of the village can be brought about only through the panchayats. Jawahar Lal Nehru has rightly said that three factors are necessary for the solidarity of India viz., community development projects, superior village panchayats, and good village cooperative societies. If these three are properly developed the foundation of our country will be so strong and solid that it will face all kinds of political and economic catastrophies, fearless even of the atom bomb.

1. *Decentralisation of administrative authority* : The administrative power was decentralised in India by the village panchayats and village people obtained the rights of self government. In pursuance of U.P. Panchayat Raj Act of 1947, 36229 panchayats and 8543 panchayat courts had been established by 15th August 1949. These panchayats had been given the rights to all kinds of reconstruction in the village. The Government officials were anxious to give them assistance and suggestions.

2. *Social reconstruction* : The Gram panchayat cultivated in the village people the habit of working together, owning responsibility for the various activities of the village, understanding things of public interest and living in cooperation and charity. The panchayati court taught them to resolve misunderstanding through mutual negotiations. The panchayats did much towards increasing the community feeling by decreasing the effects of urbanisation which had been manifested in the village youths in the form of a lack of responsibility, selfishness and impetuosity. The tendency to look upon the entire village as a family was born in the village people as a result of the community contribution of labour in the construction of roads, lanes, drains, tanks, schools and panchayat houses. In this way the panchayat has a major role in removing the irresponsibility which had been the outcome of the disintegration of the joint family and removal of caste panchayats. By arranging for radio sets and lectures etc., the panchayats created awakening in the villages. Thousands of primary schools were opened in the villages to spread education among the village children. In order to educate the older members of the community, adult education centres and night schools were opened. Literacy weeks were celebrated and resolute efforts were made to remove illiteracy from the country.

3. *Economic reconstruction* : The economic condition of villages of India is at its lowest ebb. The responsibility for this reconstruction also rests with the panchayats. Before the panchayat courts were instituted much of the hard earned income of the villagers was unnecessarily spent on litigation. Even the most trifling quarrels were taken to the courts and it sometimes took months and even years before any decision was arrived at. The cases were always postponed, while a major part of the villager's earnings found its way into the pockets of the advocates, peons, and agents. In spite of all this, justice was at a premium because it was not particularly difficult to get false witnesses. Some villagers had even adopted bearing false witness as a lucrative profession. During the British rule the rural cottage industries of India suffered a devastating blow. Some cottage industries breathed their last because they could not compete with cheaper foreign goods on the one hand while on the other they did not get any assistance from the government. The industries of the village came to grief also as a result of urbanisation which resulted in the transportation of most rural commodities into the towns and also a lack of demand for rural product. On account of this condition of the rural industries the artisans came to work in the urban factories. The village panchayat provided a cheaper means of getting justice and also encouraged the rural industries. Thirty three percent of the cases are settled by mutual negotiation and understanding. Bearing false witness became impossible because the matter now was solved within the precincts of the village. Justice was rendered free and without delay. The village panchayat assisted the cottage industries. It arranged for the sale of the produce by organising exhibitions, markets and fairs. It introduced new methods into the villages through radio and other modern innovations. As a result of the spread of education the people came to know many new facts regarding production, sales etc. in cottage industries. Beside the cottage industries the village panchayat also encouraged agriculture. India is predominantly an agricultural country. The reconstruction of the villages of the country is dependent upon agriculture. As a result of illiteracy the methods of farming, tools etc., had remained antique and the yield per acre was low. The

panchayats arranged for modern agricultural implements and co-operative societies for superior seeds, superior manure and sales etc. It increased the knowledge of the specific aspects of agriculture in the people through radio, exhibitions and speeches and got financial assistance from the government. Besides these activities towards economic reconstruction, the village panchayats participated in the work of economic uplift through many other activities like arranging for pastures for animals, plantation of forests for firewood and wood for architectural purposes, and improving the breed of the cattle etc.

4. *Political reconstruction*: The panchayat generated a social and national consciousness among the people of the villages in the modern individualistic and egoistic age. In the villages there are panchayat houses in which the people can congregate and discuss over the progress of the village. In thousands of villages Gandhi squares have been constructed so that the ideal of Gandhiji is always present and the patriotic feeling is always awake. At the same time the sense of self dependence and cooperation is being developed in the villagers through the influence of the contributory movement. A considerable length of roads, wells, schools etc., have been constructed with the help of contributed labour. The elections of the panchayats and the panchayat courts educate the villagers in the democratic method. As a member of the panchayat their ability of administration increases in arranging for the village. In spreading the democratic qualities of liberty, equality and fraternity the gram panchayats have played a major role.

5. *Centres of rural reconstruction*: Actually the village panchayats are the centres of all kinds of reconstruction in the village. These provide the villagers with opportunity of meeting at one place, sitting together and thinking as well as working cooperatively. Solving their quarrels mutually, arranging for their own village and making the village ideal rests almost entirely with the panchayat. It is through their efforts that poverty, illiteracy, narrow mindedness, disunity, frivolity and disorganisation can be removed from the village. Only these can make the villagers the ideal citizens of free India. Only these can give material shape to the dreams of

Swarajya and Ram Rajya of Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation.

Suggestions for Improvement of Panchayats

The panchayats are making considerable progress in the direction of rural development but this progress cannot be said to be entirely satisfactory. It is true that the villages of India are in such a backward state that much time must lapse before they can be developed democratically, but nevertheless some suggestions may be given in this respect. The gram panchayat can mould the life of the rural community into the right channels by removing its defects and fulfilling the needs of the modern changing life. For this there is need for some change in the management and rights etc. of the panchayats. In this regard some suggestions follow :

1. *Education of Panchas in administrative function* : In the village education is not very widespread. Many of the panchas elected by the villagers are only nominally literate. Most of them are completely ignorant of administration and justice. More often the revered elders are elected who have not the least idea of modern changes, democratic thinking and scientific researches. It is true that the officials of the government can assist them in this respect but then it no longer remains the administration of the panchas but rather becomes the administration of government employees, annihilating in the process the very ideal of panchayat. Thus there is every need for educating the panchas in respect of administration, of doing justice, modern scientific researches and democratic way of thinking, etc. After being elected they should be educated in the training centres and their knowledge increased through the media of national and international exhibitions. They should be brought into contact with the leaders of the nation in order to remove and dispel their dogmatism. It is a matter of satisfaction to know that the state governments are working in this direction. Some time back many panchas came from Rajasthan to see the international agriculture fair at Delhi and gained inspiration by meeting the Prime Minister. Prior to this a trainload of villagers had travelled around the country. Much work is still needed in this direction.

2. *Decrease in the intervention of the government* : Besides educating the panchas the interference of government officials in the activities of the panchayats should also be reduced in order to attain a state in which the panchayats should be given full rights in matters of the village. The government officials sometimes intervene unnecessarily in the activities of the panchayats. This not only hinders the work of the panchayat but also reduces the respect of the panchas and deprives them of their enthusiasm for work. It is usually seen that the panchayat officer and panchayat inspector is given the most respected place when he adorns the meeting, while even the sarpanch occupies a position of comparatively lower status. This is very improper. The government official, no matter what is his rank, is always a paid and hired servant of the public. He has the freedom of making use of all rights in serving the public, but he will always be given a position lower than the representative of the people in the government of the people and even more so when this representative is an honorary leader. The government officials should try to increase the respect of the panchas in the eyes of the villagers but this can happen only when there is adequate education spread among them and they understand their rights.

3. *Control over formation of political parties* : Democracy is the government of the people but there is just that much more opportunity for party politics. As in the state and central elections, elections of the panchayats are also infested with the formation of parties on the basis of caste, class and other mean interests, and even after the election the activities of the panchayats are interrupted by this party politics. This defect is found not only in respect of panchayats but in all kinds of election in the country. There is need for a strong revolution to root out this evil. Without this revolution the foundations of democracy cannot be strengthened in India.

4. *Increase in the rights of the panchayats* : The rights of the panchayats should be increased for rural reconstruction. The panchayat should be given the right to demand exemption from payment of taxes in the event of any famine or disaster in agriculture.

Rural Problems

The condition of the villages in India at present is very much unsatisfactory. The villages which were once like heaven on earth are today the very images of poverty, hunger, disease, disunity and disorganisation. Not only assault but even incidents of armed robbery and murder are commonplace in the villages. Litigation is resorted to even over the trifles and this creates persistent mutual enmity. The dry and gloomy faces of the villagers advertise their low state of health. The villages which were once famous for honesty today give shelter to people who surpass their urban brothers in deceit. In the villages where at one time the ideal of morality was very high, today corruption, moral degeneration and social deviance pass all limits. Superstition, ignorance, lack of education, poverty, unemployment etc., have turned the villages into detestable places to live in. The problems of agriculture and economic problems of the Indian villages are grave, the social problems are no less serious. Of these the chief ones are the following :

Agricultural Problems

In India the condition of agriculture is very bad. The major problems in this respect are :

(i) *Old and unskilled methods* : In India the progressive methods of farming have not yet been popularized so that the farmer persists with the old methods. Ploughing, sowing, harvesting and other allied activities still follow the old pattern. As a result greater labour yields less.

(ii) *Old kinds of tools* : Besides the methods of farming, Indian agriculture is further handicapped by the use of old and outmoded tools. Modern implements like tractors, sowers, mowers and harrow have not been introduced on the scene for the respective agricultural activities. The reason for this backwardness is that the farms are subdivided into small pieces and the farmers have no adequate knowledge of those tools nor the resources to purchase them.

(iii) *Undeveloped varieties of seeds* : Not much has been achieved in India towards the improvement of the varieties of seeds and whatever little has been done does not spread over any consi-

derable area. Most of the villagers use undeveloped and degenerate seeds on their farms. As a result the yield per acre is extremely low.

(iv) *Small and scattered farms* : Most of the farms in India are small and scattered. Due to the fact that the succeeding sons have equal right to their deceased father's property, the land is divided among the heirs. In this way as the land is further subdivided in each succeeding generation the resulting pieces of land become uneconomic holdings which means that they do not yield food crops in proportion to the efforts expended upon them.

(v) *Shortage in the means of irrigation* : There is a serious shortage of the means of irrigation in India. The crop is not very good because the plants do not get water at the proper time. Mostly agriculture depends upon the rains for water, which makes it a gamble based upon the monsoon. If the rains come in the proper quantity the crop is good, otherwise it is a failure.

(vi) *Shortage of manure* : There is a considerable shortage in the supply of good manure in adequate quantities to the villages of India. Consequently, India cannot have the same number of crops every year as those which are possible in some other countries. Most of the farmers are ignorant of even the way of manufacturing manures. Knowledge of chemical manures is almost negligible and even where the chemical manures are available, the quantity is insufficient to meet the needs of the farmers.

(vii) *Destruction of crops by insects* : In India the villagers are not acquainted with the modern methods of preventing and curing diseases to which the plants are susceptible. Thus small insects do heavy damage to the crops. Besides insects, animals like monkeys and foxes and even some birds help themselves to a good part of the crops.

Besides the above mentioned special problems the villages of India are faced with such other agricultural problems like the complete ignorance of the farmer regarding the new scientific research upon agriculture, etc.

Economic Problems

The economic problems are also very serious in the Indian villages. The major problems are the following :

1. *Lack of proper sales organisation* : There is no proper organisation for the sale of the produce of agriculture and cottage industries in the villages of India with the result that the producers do not get proper remuneration for their labour and their enthusiasm does not get any incentive. In the villages of U.P. 65% of produce is sold in the villages.

2. *Indebtedness and high rates of interest* : Indebtedness has reached a very high level in the Indian villages, and the villagers do not get any relief from it because the rate of interest is extremely high. Sometimes the money-lender goes to the extent of taking possession of the animals of the debtor and legally dispossessing him of his land as well. As a result of extremely high rate of interest the progress of agriculture is not possible and at the same time neither any increase is possible in the small scale industries.

3. *Lack of facility in the means of transport and communication* : In the villages of India the road surfaces are not at all pleasing and neither is there any proper facility of motor vehicles for the transportation of goods. And in some places even the letters in the post office are distributed only once a week. The trade activity moves at a snail's pace because there is not much facility in the means of transport and communications.

4. *Assistance to small scale and cottage industries* : The cottage and rural industries of India are in a helpless condition. They neither have adequate knowledge of the scientific instruments of production, nor are these instruments easily available, and even if they are available there is not enough money with the producer to enable him to purchase them. The produced goods cannot compete with the goods produced in the factory, thus the rural industries are continually degenerating. The economic condition of the village cannot be improved without solving the problems of the rural industries.

5. *Problems of landless agricultural labourers* : The condition of the landless labourers in the agricultural sphere is very deplorable. Their annual income is less than 500 rupees per capita and they are occupied only for 218 days in the year. Only a small percentage of labourers are employed for the whole year. The Planning Commission has admitted that the problem of these labourers is

undoubtedly big and complex, which has not only a relation with the village economy but which, in the next 15 to 20 years, will have a serious influence upon the entire economic and social development.

6. *Problem of cattle* : The problem of the cattle in the villages of India is also serious because they neither get sufficient fodder nor they are protected from disease. There is great shortage of cattle of a good breed and no adequate measures are being implemented to improve it. Many of the animals consume fodder even though they are completely useless because killing them is forbidden by religious dogmas.

7. *Undeveloped vegetation* : Another problem of the rural economy is the lack of an adequate use of the forest wealth. The forests are not properly protected nor properly developed and proper use is also not made of them.

Besides the above economic problems of the villages, some other problems also assume serious proportions, for example, the problems of famine, floods, monsoon failure, etc.

Social problems

There are many serious problems in the social sphere of the villages as well. The most important among them are :

(1) *Illiteracy* : In the Indian villages the problem of illiteracy is very serious. Even today the larger number in the rural population is uneducated and illiterate. In respect of the technical and agricultural training, the picture is even more gloomy because there is extreme shortage of it. This not only breeds superstition and dogmatism, it also hinders economic progress.

(2) *Poverty and unemployment* : The problem of poverty and unemployment in the villages is no less serious. All the people in the villages do not get even two square meals a day. In some extreme cases many people do not have even adequate cotton clothing let alone the luxury of woollens. The houses are small, inadequate and uncemented. The number of people in the villages who are employed through out the year is extremely small. Even the farmers do not work all the time in many months of the year while at certain periods they are completely unoccupied.

Poverty and unemployment have together spread corruption, fifth and moral degeneration in the villages.

(3) *Bad condition of Health* : A very serious problem in the village is the extremely bad and impoverished condition of health. In India the birth rate as well as the death rate are the highest as compared to the other countries and the span of life is the shortest. The rates of child birth and infanticide are also the highest in the world. Due to inadequate and undernourishing food there is no proper arrangement for eradicating them. The houses are very much insanitary while the use of intoxicating drugs makes the state of health even worse.

Beside the above problems other defects like superstition, religious dogmatism, casteism, untouchability, factionalism disunity and litigation etc., are to be seen in the villages. There is a lack of political awaekning. The means communication not being avail- problems which arise from time to time. Due to the forementioned serious defects the condition of village panchayat is also not satisfactory.

Measures to solve rural problems

Effort is needed to supplement the inadequate planning for eradicating these defects from the Indian villages. In this respect certain positive measures may be suggested, of which the major ones are :

1. *Improvement in Agriculture* : The first step towards the reconstruction of the Indian villages should be an improvement in the state agriculture. The following suggestions can be made :

(i) The new methods of agriculture and farming should be exhibited and made popular.

(ii) Pointing out the shortcomings of the old implements the use of the new kinds of tools should be disseminated, these tools should be made available in the villages at reasonable prices.

(iii) Improved seeds should be cultivated on government farms and be made available to the farmers at reasonable prices.

(iv) The scattered farms should be unified and the fragmentation of farms beyond a certain limit should be prevented by enacting laws to this effect in order to prevent them from becoming uneconomic holdings.

(v) There should be proper provision of tubewells, wells, canals, etc.

(vi) The advantages of chemical manure should be propounded and broadcast, besides making them available in the villages at reasonable prices. The process of making compost manure from cowdung should be popularised. In this respect the panchayats should be assisted by the Government.

(vii) Measures for protecting crops from destructive insects should be exhibited on Government farms and broadcast in the villages. Insecticides should be made available in the villages at reasonable prices.

(viii) The Government should distribute medicines for curing the plants of the diseases which they may have contracted.

2. *Economic reconstruction* : An important step in the direction of solution of rural problems is economic reconstruction. The following suggestions on the subject can be put forward :

(i) There should be arrangement for the sale of the village produce through cooperative societies.

(ii) The farmers, businessmen and other people engaged in small industries should be able to get the necessary capital at a low rate of interest from the co-operative banks.

(iii) Insurance schemes and other schemes for saving should be circulated among the villages.

(iv) The roads in the villages should be reconstructed and most of them properly surfaced so as to be able to withstand heavy vehicular traffic which should be used for transporting the goods. As far as practicable the railways should be placed near the villages.

(v) The Government should extend special encouragement and assistance to cottage and small industries. New tools and capital at a low rate of interest should be made available to them, proper assistance being given to facilitate the sale of goods which they produce.

(vi) It is necessary to organise business fairs and exhibitions in the villages at regular intervals so that business may be encouraged and industrial knowledge increased.

(vii) Maximum efforts should be diverted towards the reduction of middle men like landlords and money lenders from between farmer and labourer, on the one hand and the producer and consumer on the other.

(viii) The Government should provide improved strains of cattle for improving the breed of cattle in the villages. Necessary training for poultry farming and fish farming should be imparted. The improved cattle should be exhibited alongwith the methods of improving the strains of cattle.

(ix) Efforts should be made to provide the landless labourers with the maximum of land by encouraging the Bhoodan Movement. Laws should also be passed in respect of the wages of agricultural labourers.

(x) The Government should construct dams at strategical points in order to prevent floods and also construct canals to reduce the probability of floods. During times of floods and similar natural catastrophic happenings, Takavi should be distributed and farmer exempted from the revenue.

(xi) The village panchayats should develop the pastures and forests contiguous to the village and they should also enact laws for their protection.

3. *Social reconstruction* : The problems of Indian villages cannot be solved without resorting to social reconstruction. The major suggestions in this respect are the following :

(i) Social education centres and adult education centres should be opened in the villages for the dissemination of literacy. Basic primary education should be made free and compulsory.

(ii) Efforts should be made to provide employment for the unemployed along with efforts that are being made for removing poverty. Some control over the rate of interest should be exercised and wasteful expenditure curbed.

(iii) The basic laws of health should also be made known to the villagers and contamination of food grain prevented.

(iv) Adequate provision of hospitals and maternity homes should be made in the villages where the poor should be treated free of charge. Measures for the prevention of infectious diseases should be implemented.

(v) It is necessary to remove insanitary conditions from the villages if disease is to be prevented. The drains should be widened and cleanliness should be propagated among the villages. This work can also be done by donated or contributed labour.

(vi) There is need for social propaganda for the eradication of untouchability, factionalism and superstitions etc.

(vii) In order to reduce the extent of litigation the panchayat should be given the right of considering matters of minor importance.

4. *Political awakening* : The problem of rural improvement is not so simple as to be successfully solved by the Government alone and unaided. There is a great need for political awakening.

Rural Reconstruction

Aim of Rural Reconstruction

The term *rural reconstruction* means construction of the village in a new way, beginning all over again. The rural problems will be solved in this reconstruction. This will create radical changes in the life of villages and the economic system will be renovated or improved. The importance of rural reconstruction is apparent from the aim of rural reconstruction. The objectives include the eradication of poverty, improvement in the economic condition, improvement in the methods of agriculture, the organisation of a co-operative economic system by removing indebtedness, regeneration of cottage industries, donation of labour, development of communal feeling, spread of education, progress of health, sanitation, arrangement of residential quarters, progress in the means of transportation, establishment of co-operative societies, establishment of local administration, arrangements for recreation, removal of social malpractices like untouchability and caste distinctions and other aspects of an integral progress covering the social, economic and political aspects of rural life. The non-violent *swaraj* of Mahatma Gandhi was based upon the idea of this rural reconstruction.

Importance of Rural Reconstruction

Rural reconstruction will establish a non-violent *Swaraj*, which has been described by Mahatma Gandhi in just so many words. In a non-violent *Swaraj* nobody will be the enemy of any one else, every one will mind his own business, no one will be illiterate, gradually every one's stock of knowledge will increase. There will be less disease among the people, no one will be extremely poor and the laborious or willing people will always get work. There will be no scope whatsoever for gambling, drinking, corruption or class struggle. The rich people will use their wealth prudently and will not waste it in increasing their comforts and enjoyment. In *swaraj*, such a state, in which a handful of wealthy people live in luxurious houses while thousands upon thousands live the life of animals in dark and airless slums should not exist. This constitutes Mahatma Gandhi's description of *swarajya*, the aim of rural reconstruction. The Government of India are also making continual efforts towards rural reconstruction. By rural reconstruction a socialistic system will be established in the country, exploitation will be eliminated and the rural population will undergo social and economic development. Thus the importance of rural reconstruction cannot be over-stressed. Indian culture will be regenerated and will further develop through rural reconstruction. Rural reconstruction will lead to the development of agricultural and cottage industries which will solve the food problem of the country and save millions of rupees in foreign exchange which goes towards the import of food grains, and it will also increase the national income. Adequate raw material will be made available to the industries in the country through rural reconstruction. Finally, rural reconstruction will result in the establishment of a true democracy in India, because most of the population lives in the villages.

Importance of Rural Planning

In the words of the Planning Commission, "Planning is essentially a way of organising and utilizing resources to maximum advantages

in terms of defined social ends." In this way the plans of rural reconstruction will try to take maximum advantage from the available resources, keeping in view the objectives mentioned above. It is obvious that planned reconstruction is the most superior method. Thus in order to make the best use of rural reconstruction it is necessary to avail of planning. Actually, the importance which has been accorded to rural reconstruction in the preceding paragraph is also the importance of rural planning because these objectives cannot be achieved in the absence of planning. In this way, rural reconstruction and rural planning are of the utmost importance in a predominantly agricultural country like India.

Governmental Efforts for Rural Reconstruction

At present the Government of India is making strenuous efforts to remove the defects in the rural structure and is attempting rural reconstruction by solving social, economic and agricultural problems of the villages. The specific efforts in this direction are the following :

(1) Land Reforms, (2) The Five Year Plans, (3) Co-operative movements, (4) Community Development Projects, (5) Reorganisation of village panchayats.

Of these the village panchayats have been described in the preceding chapter. Thus the present chapter will contain a detailed description of the Five Year Plans and the co-operative movement.

Besides these government projects rural reconstruction is also being attempted through the Bhoodan Movement under the direction of Vinoba Bhave. The quantum of efforts made to solve the problems of the villages under the Five Year Plans can be seen or estimated by studying the development which is the result of the first, second and third five year plans.

In most of the states in India the zamindari abolition laws have succeeded in eliminating the intermediaries from between the farmer and the government. Agriculture is being improved. New methods and new tools, together with the methods of using them, are being demonstrated on government farms. Arrangements have been made for using better kinds of seeds on government farms which are distributed to the farmers through the government seed

godowns. In the different states laws have been formulated for preventing the extreme subdivision and fragmentation of farms while efforts have also been made to recognise the scattered farms. The central and state governments have made many major and minor plans for the development of the means of irrigation. Many tubewells have been bored and numerous canals constructed. Factories have been set up for producing chemical manure in the country. Methods of protecting the crops from insects are also being developed. Arrangement for the distribution of seeds and sales of farm products is being made through government societies. Money is now available from the cooperative banks at a low rate of interest. In particular, cottage and small scale industries are being encouraged. The means of transport and communication are also being developed. New roads are being built while thousands of miles of roads are being cemented. New rail tracks are being laid. Efforts are being made to assist the villagers in buying, selling and increasing their knowledge of agriculture, industry and other subjects through organising exhibitions and fairs. New trees are being planted, this process being given a festive look by making it an occasion for celebration. Laws have also been made relating to the forest wealth. The village panchayats have been invested with great authority in the form of comprehensive rights. The panchayat courts have been given the right of looking into minor civil and criminal matters of the village. Attempts have been made to provide as many villages as possible with panchayat radios. Great effort is being exerted towards the development of primary and adult education. The villagers are being taught the lesson of self dependence and cleanliness through movement for labour contribution. By encouraging the Bhoodan movement efforts are being made to provide the landless labourers with land. Through community development projects and development blocks a comprehensive effort is being made in the direction of rural reconstruction. Family planning is being encouraged and made popular among the villagers. The number of hospitals and maternity homes is continuously increasing. People are trying to bring the maximum possible number of improved bulls and buffaloes into the villages.

It is evident from the foregoing description that attention has been paid to the solution of all the serious problems of the villages in the plans which are currently operating but the facilities provided by these plans are not available in all villages and neither has the progress achieved by these plans been satisfactory. The facility of hospitals and maternity homes has been provided in very few villages. Free and compulsory primary education is still a possibility which is yet to materialize. The attempts that have been made towards the solution of the problems of the low breed of cattle are inadequate and the condition of agricultural labourers remains unimproved. The measures for the prevention of floods and famines etc., are definitely inadequate. Even today thousands of villages do not have the means of irrigation. The condition of panchayats is not satisfactory and in some places the panchayat courts have served to increase the quarrels instead of decreasing them. The amount of money spent upon the construction of roads in the villages is out of proportion to the quality of the roads built. Proportionate benefit does not accrue from the money invested in exhibitions. Not much improvement has been achieved in the sphere of cottage and small scale industries.

Nevertheless, the intensity of the rural problems is continually decreasing. Many projects for cooperative societies, cooperative banks, community development projects, development blocks, zamindari abolition, education, the popularization of radio, etc., have been definitely and really beneficial. Actually, the rural problems of India are so diversified and profound that the common measures to solve them cannot produce the desired results. Only radical efforts by the government and the public can bring about the desired improvement in the conditions of the villages.

Community Development Projects

The Planning Commission has defined the community development project in these words: "Community development is an attempt to bring about a social and economic transformation of village life through the efforts of the people themselves." In this way the community development projects indicate or mean those

projects for social and economic reconstruction in the villages which are implemented with the co-operation of the public itself. In the words of A.R. Desai, "The community development project is the method through which a Five Year Plan seeks to initiate a process controlled by the community itself." Here community implies rural community. Elucidating the meaning of community development project, it has been laid down in *India 1971*, published by the Government of India : "It is a programme of aided self help to be planned and implemented by the villagers themselves, the Government offering only technical guidance and financial assistance. Its objectives are to develop self reliance in the individual and initiative in the village community. Community thinking and collective action are encouraged through people's institutions like the Panchayats, Co-operative Societies, Vikas Mandals, etc."

Aims of Community Development

Writing in his book *India's Changing Villages*, Prof. S.C. Dubey has recognised the following two aims of community development projects —

1. To manage or achieve an adequate increase in the country's agricultural produce and a progress in the means of communication, rural health, cleanliness and rural education.
2. To initiate and to direct a process of integral cultural change aimed at transforming the social and economic life of the village.

The following major aims have been recognised in the Ministry of Community Development of the Government of India publication, *A Guide to Community Development* :

1. To Create a change in the mental outlook of the masses.
2. To develop responsible and active leadership in the village
3. To make the villagers self dependent and progressive.
4. To modernize agriculture on the one hand and to develop cottage industries on the other in order to raise the economic status of the villagers.
5. To improve the condition of the women and families of the villagers in order to make the suggested improvements practicable.

6. To develop properly the future citizens of the nation.
7. To protect the interests of the rural educators.
8. To raise the standard of health among the rural populace and to protect them against disease.

Short-term objectives : The aims of the community development projects have been divided into two parts — short-term objectives and long-term objectives. The short-term objectives are the following :

1. The maximum possible increase in agricultural production.
2. To solve the problem of unemployment in the villages.
3. To develop the means of communication in the villages.
4. To improve the centres of primary education, public health and recreation in the villages.
5. To improve the condition of houses.
6. To encourage cottage industries and indigenous handicrafts.

Long-term objectives : The long-term objective of community development projects is the complete planned development of all physical and human resources. In it arrangements will be made to provide all villagers with full employment. The goal of community development project is the development of villages in such a way that the citizens of the country may not lack anything which is the ideal of a welfare state, and that every one should get adequate food and that every one should progress socially, morally and financially.

In this way, in brief, the community development projects aim at the integral development of the village through the efforts of the villagers and the assistance of the Government.

Importance of Community Projects

Describing the importance which the community projects have for rural life, the Planning Commission says in *The Second Five Year Plan* : "It is a problem, briefly, of changing the outlook of 70 million families living in the countryside, arousing in them enthusiasm for new knowledge and new ways of life and filling them with the ambition and the will to live and work for a better life. Extension services and community organisations are among the principal sources of vitality in democratic planning and

rural development projects are the means by which through co-operative self help and local effort, villages and groups of villages can achieve in increasing measure both social change and economic progress and become partners in the national plan."

Social development projects will involve improvement in all the aspects, social, economic and other, of rural life. The main effects which development projects have upon rural life are as follows :

1. *Agricultural development* : Agriculture is the foundation of rural economic life. The happiness and the prosperity of the village depend upon the progress of agriculture. The main cause of poverty in the Indian villagers is the backward condition of agriculture. The main problems of Indian agriculture are old techniques of agriculture, dearth of new tools, absence of manures and fertilizers, excessive subdivision of land, dearth of the means of irrigation, shortage of good seeds, etc. The community development projects have made efforts to solve all these problems which beset Indian agriculture. New techniques of farming are demonstrated in the villages and manures, seeds, tools and fertilizers are distributed. The community projects also undertake the repairing of old wells, supplementing them by sinking new wells so that the farmers have the necessary facilities available for irrigation. Efforts are made to protect the land from soil erosion and other maladies.

2. *Economic progress* : The greatest problem of rural life in India is its poverty. The community development projects have encouraged cottage industries and handicrafts. Unemployed people are provided with work through auxiliary and useful services. Although these efforts are as yet quite inadequate, it is hoped that a continuous increase in them will lead to rural life in India becoming more prosperous in the future.

3. *Development in respect of animals* : Another major problem and obstacle to progress in the Indian villages is the deplorable condition of the animals which are even today employed in ploughing the fields. The ox is used for this purpose. In order to improve the strain of the species, the community development projects have made use of good oxen. Improved poultry have also been arranged for the development of poultry farming.

4. *Development of education* : Most of the people residing in the villages of India are uneducated and illiterate. They also lack modern knowledge. Without the spread of education in the rural areas, no progress of any kind whatsoever can possibly be expected. The community development projects have paid the desired and necessary attention to the education of children and adults, men and women. Schools for primary and adult education have been opened. Arrangements have been made for education.

5. *Training for development* : In the villages of India social and economic development cannot take place in the existing circumstances. It is necessary to have people trained and skilled in rural development. Under the community projects arrangements have been made to train village workers, both male and female, block development authorities and other people concerned with the programme of rural development.

6. *Development of the means of transport* : In the villages of India, there is a dearth of the means of transport, serious enough to be a great obstacle to industry and business. The community development projects have repaired the old roads and also managed to construct new roads. At various points small culverts have also been provided. These measures will not only improve business but will also serve to maintain the contact of the villagers with the world at large.

7. *Cleanliness* : Dirt and incleanliness reign supreme in the Indian villages. It is the cause of the spread of many kinds of diseases and the lowering of the general standard of health. Development projects have endeavoured to arrange for the purgation of the villages. A considerable length of drains have been constructed and steps have been taken to purify and keep pure the drinking water of the wells.

8. *Protection of health and the maintenance of a certain standard* : In the villages of India epidemics and many less widespread diseases prove fatal to many men, women and children every year due to the near absence of medication and facilities for safe delivery. The condition of health of women and children is extremely dissatisfactory. Arrangements have been made for one health centre in each development block. Mobile dispensaries have also

been arranged for, midwives and nurses are also being trained to staff all the new dispensaries.

9. *Arrangement for residences* : Most of the houses in villages are old fashioned and small. The community development projects have decided to assist the villagers in building houses and also arrange for providing them with modern plans and building methods of good and cheap houses.

10. *Social Welfare* : The community development projects have also given due attention to social welfare in the villages, making arrangements for games, variety shows, etc., for the entertainment of the public. Gramophone, radio and cinema provide the villager with entertainment and also serve to enhance his stock of knowledge.

Criticism of Community Development Projects

Looking at the foregoing details of the progress, both social and economic, achieved by the community development projects in villages, it becomes apparent that these projects have completely ignored many social and economic problems like the problem of the condition of the landless labourers, the problem of the backward condition of village and cottage industries, etc.

Secondly even those social and economic problems which have received attention in these projects, are not being solved in an appropriate manner. For example, the arrangement for free and compulsory education is as yet a thing of the future. The Programme Evaluation Organisation established by the Planning Commission put forward numerous criticisms of the community development programmes in its reports, of which the major ones are as follows :

1. *Lack of solution of local problems* : There is a lack of solution of local rural problems in the community development projects. This not only hinders the progress of the development programme but also decreases the faith of the public in these projects.

2. *Dearth of harmony within the government departments* : The community development organisation is not in proper harmony with the other governmental departments.

3. *Shortage of necessary implements* : There is an acute shortage of necessary implements in the development programme and as a result even the work which is started cannot be completed.

4. *Shortage of trained personnel* : Much effort has been made for training the officials in community development projects but even then trained people are not available in required numbers.

5. *Absence of proper public co-operation* : The community development programme could not become a public movement. At present it is not getting the proper and active co-operation of the public.

6. *Shortage of female village workers* : There is a great need for trained female workers for the emancipation of the rural women but, at present, they exist in very small number.

Suggestions

Actually there is an urgent need for increasing the awareness of the public towards the plan for the success of the community development projects. Some suggestions, of which a few are given below, have been made in this connection.

1. *Greater emphasis upon local problems* : The pattern of the community development projects should not be the same everywhere. The projects should lay more stress upon the solution of problems peculiar to the locality.

2. *Appointment of officials acquainted with rural conditions* : Another way of arousing the interest of the public in community development projects is to appoint officials who are acquainted with rural culture and its ways and are also sympathetic and respectful towards them, so that they may be able to mix with the villagers and make these plans and projects reflect the aspirations of the people.

3. *Appointment of workers, both male and female, to be selected from the villages as far as possible* : Another way of awakening the sense of identity in villagers with the projects is to appoint or select the male and female village workers from among the villagers themselves.

4. *Organisation of the maximum possible training camps in the villages* : If a maximum possible number of training camps are

held in the villages, the villagers will undoubtedly reciprocate heartily and will take a greater interest in the projects.

5. *More work and less propaganda* : The officials detailed for the implementation of the development projects should adopt the principle of "More work and less propaganda." It will result in the public showing greater faith in the projects.

6. *Establishing youth organisations and eliciting their co-operation* : Before starting the programmes of development in the villages, youth organisations should be established and the programmes of development should be started with their co-operation when such organisations are well under way. The result of this move will be that the whole village will soon start taking interest in these programmes.

Bhoodan and Gram Dan Movement

The contribution of the Bhoodan movement towards the development of the Indian villages is very important. Bhoodan movement, as is obvious from its name, is the movement for donating land to the landless people. Through this movement it has been planned to bring about non-violent revolution in the economic field within the country. In any country, it is fundamentally impractical to talk of equality and brotherhood when millions of people are landless while a handful of people possess large tracts of land. In order to put the democratic ideals into practice in the life of the country, it is essential to make a proper division so that no person may be in possession of land for the cultivation of which he needs manual help and also that no man should possess such a small piece of land upon which he cannot cultivate economically. In a society in which millions of farmers are landless and plough the fields of others, the people of the country do not have complete freedom. A large number of landless farmers spend a life which is in no way better than the life commonly led by slaves. Thus there have been movements for the proper distribution of land in all the progressive countries of the world. In Russia and other Communist countries violent and bloody revolutions were initiated

for the proper distribution of land. The violent revolutions have the advantage of effecting the improvements without delay but the improvements which transform only the external structure and not the psychology of the people should not be termed revolutionary in the real sense of the term. As a matter of fact the real social revolution takes place in the hearts of the people. It is a question of a change of heart. As long as the feelings of the different classes do not change and as long as these feelings do not settle down the changes made in the external structure cannot be permanent. And even as it is, wherever changes in the social and economic structure have been brought about violently, these changes have either proved temporary or making them permanent has necessitated constant efforts over a long period of time.

In the modern age there is need for an economic revolution, not just a political revolution, in India. The country has become independent and continuous economic progress through the Five Year Plans is taking place but as long as land is not properly and equally divided, the condition of millions of farmers cannot be any better than their condition in preindependence era. The Zamindari Abolition Acts in the various states of India constitute a solid step in the direction of proper distribution of land, because these laws have given proprietary rights to the farmers over the land which they were cultivating. Compensating the Zamindars in various proportions, their rights over their lands were taken from them. As a result of this official step the farmers gained a lot of advantage and the economic structure of the village experienced a revolution at least in its outward form. But as far as the question of a change of heart is concerned, economic revolution is a thing of the future. The Zamindars did not happily part with their land so that their hearts were filled with hatred for the farmers and the Government. As a result of the increase in this hatred the mutual relations between the village people deteriorated whereas what was needed was that the people of the village should feel that the land of the country was everyone's property and that it should be used for the benefit of every one. The Bhoodan movement was started in order to spread this ideal among the people.

Describing the aims of the Bhoodan movement, its founder Acharya Vinoba Bhave has pointed out that every one should have a right to the land in a just social system based upon equality. Therefore, he does not beg for donations but asks for a portion which according to justice belongs to the poor. The main aim of the Boodan movement is to spread this idea so that economic and social inequality may be removed without any major revolution. With this objective, Acharaya Vinoba Bhave started on a tour of the country and going to places on foot, appealed to the people to donate land. The Bhoodan movement started on 18th April 1951. Its aim was to acquire fifty million acres of land in order to provide landless rural family with some land for agriculture. As the movement progressed the Government and many illustrious leaders actively cooperated.

As time went by movements for many other kinds of donations joined the Bhoodan movement. People were asked to donate wealth for the poor through the wealth donation movement. Through intelligence donation movement, appeals were made for the use of intellectual capacities for the attainment of the ideals of Bhoodan. Through the life donation movement, appeals were made to the people to devote their lives to the attainment of the ideals of Bhoodan. These kinds of movement include house donations and donation of other means.

The Bhoodan movement is now gradually taking the form of the Gramdan movement. In Gramdan, as is obvious by the name, people think in terms of donating the entire village so that it may be regarded as a property of the rural community. The level of co-operation for rural development is very high in the villages acquired under the Gramdan movement. In a conference organised by all India Sarva Seva Sangh at Palwal in Mysore State, emphasis was laid upon the need for close co-operation between community development projects and the Gramdan movement. An executive group of the community development Ministry deliberated upon this question and in May, 1958 after the conference of Commissioners, certain practical decisions in this respect were taken. Now more attention was given to the villages given in Gramdan than to other

villages while opening community development blocks and while starting other programmes of community development.

In this way the Bhoodan and Gramdan movements aim at fulfilling the aim of a non-violent revolution under the direction of such leaders as Acharya Vinoba Bhave and with the efforts of the Central and State Governments. Not only Indian but even many politicians, thinkers and scientists of Europe and America, Africa and Asia have shown interest in the application of this nonviolent revolution. The success of this experiment will benefit not only the population of India but will make evident to the entire world the possibilities of non-violent economic revolutions. At this stage it cannot be said as to how far the Bhoodan movement will be able to solve the problems of the Indian agriculturist but it can still be said that the present level of achievement of the Bhoodan and Gramdan movements is not negligible. Even if this experiment does not succeed it can serve as a source of inspiration for future movements of the same kind. Here it is necessary to remember that the Bhoodan movement has not as yet achieved any success which can encourage such enthusiasm. Most of the land donated is not cultivable and the intentions of the donors do not seem to be entirely selfless. Even the land so far received falls far short of the expected quantity. But in spite of these difficulties this movement is worthy of praise and deserves co-operation.

Social Education

Inaugurating the Village Adult Education Seminar of UNESCO in 1949 Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the erstwhile education minister, defined social education by pointing out that it means education for the entire man. It will make him literate so that the knowledge of the world may become available to him. It will tell him exactly how he has to adapt himself to his environment and how he has to derive the maximum benefit from his physical conditions. It will teach him the modern methods of handicrafts and production, so that he may be able to effect his financial improvement. It will teach him about the science of immunity from diseases of individual

and community, so that his domestic life may be prosperous and happy. Finally, this educates the citizen so that he may be able to assist his government in its endeavour for making the country strong and establishing peace. Originally, the meaning attached to social education was merely literacy of adults but now it has come to include all kinds of education for the adults. In the words of Biharee, "Social education is the stimulation in each citizen of a greater awareness of the advantage of the pattern of society as conceived in the constitution and a persistent desire for progress towards such a pattern socially, economically and culturally."

Aims of Social Education

In the words of Jawaharlal Nehru, "To educate the adults in the 3 Rs and the affairs of world, a network of social education organisation has been set up." In this way while social education aims at removing illiteracy it also endeavours to acquaint the problems of this world. In the words of K.G. Saiyedain. "The aim of the movement is to create a spirit of friendship between people by bringing together men and women of different nationalities." In this way the aim of social education is both individual as well as social. It seeks to elevate all the various kinds of standards of life, be they physical, mental or intellectual, in order that people may be in a position to make active contributions in all spheres of national progress. It teaches them about the reconstruction of the village

Programme for social education

The programme for social education has been divided into the following five phases :

- (1) Spread of literacy. (2) Acquainting people with the laws of health and Sanitation. (3) Improvement in economic level. (4) Encouraging the sense of citizenship and imparting awareness of rights and duties. (5) Healthy recreation concurring with the needs of society and the individual.

Characteristics of Social Education

"The main characteristics of the above mentioned programme of social education are the following :

1. *Spread of literacy* : Social education spreads literacy among the adults.

2. *Advancement of handicrafts and cottage industries* : Besides spreading literacy, social education makes handicrafts and cottage industries popular.

3. *Training in self administration* : Social education trains the adults in self administration.

4. *Training for ideal citizenship* : Social education tries to make the adults ideal citizens.

5. *Education in health and cleanliness* : Social education informs the villagers about the laws of health and cleanliness.

6. *Knowledge of the problems of the world* : Social education imparts the knowledge of the problems of the world to the adults.

7. *Integral development* : Social education directs its efforts at achieving the integral development of the adults.

8. *Organisation of healthy recreation* : Social education, besides formal education, organises healthy recreation through the medium of radio and cultural programmes.

9. *Contribution in rejuvenation* : One of the major characteristics of social education is that, besides education, it contributes to every programme for rejuvenation.

Methods of Social Education

It is on the basis of these characteristics that the methods of social education have been developed. Hence night schools have been arranged in the village centre for teaching the adults. Social education is not limited only to adult males. This education is imparted even to adult women as well as to youngmen and adolescent boys and girls and the syllabus laid down for them concurs harmoniously with their peculiar psychology. In order to increase the attraction of the programmes such means as movies, exhibition vans, posters and charts are employed. A characteristic of this method is the broadcasting of programmes over the radio. Community consciousness and nationality are popularised and communicated to the people through social acting, folk dances and folk songs. The people are also informed about the scientific means of agriculture and handicrafts and attempts to develop the qualities of leadership are made. At regular intervals sports competitions and development fairs are organised. Educational excursions are also arranged periodically.

Programmes for composing adult literature are made and mobile and permanent reading rooms are also arranged for.

Problems of Social Education

In India, there are many problems which plague social education. The major ones are the following :

1. The rural people are not very spirited in their approach to social education.
2. Often the adults do not show much of an inclination towards social education.
3. The night schools are terminated during the peak season in agriculture.
4. There is a serious absence of proper literature for social education.
5. Being brought up in an urban atmosphere, most of the workers are unable to take proper interest in social education.
6. Other programmes besides literacy are not emphasized properly.
7. Proper and adequate means for social education are not available.

Suggestions Advanced by the Planning Commission

The Planning Commission had made some very important suggestions for the solution of problems plaguing social education, the more important of which are given below :

1. In social education, education of life, health, recreation, domestic and economic education should also be given the necessary attention.
2. After imparting the knowledge of language, efforts should be made to strengthen this knowledge through films, radio, libraries, reading rooms, etc.
3. The programmes for social education should be adopted and modified according to the local needs.
4. Much care should be exercised in the selection and training of the personnel for social education.
5. The Teachers Training Colleges should carry out research about the ways of making people literate.
6. There should be a suitable administrative machinery for maintaining a certain standard in the work of social education. It

must have become quite obvious from this brief description of the different aspects of social education that this plan has some predetermined objectives which are immensely beneficial to the country. There can be no two opinions on the subject that the Indian villages are in great need of social education and it is the only means to their redemption. As it is made obvious by the survey of the progress of social education in India, there is need for much work in this direction. But there is no doubt that the present progress of social education is not entirely dissatisfactory. The suggestions made by the Planning Commission for the solution of the problems of social education are very useful. In India social education is still in its infancy. But nevertheless, "If today the villages of India are humming with greater activities than ever before, some credit for this must go to the social education movement."

Distinctions in Indian Villages

It is common to speak of the "Indian Village" or of the "Indian peasant". While it is true that many problems are common to the entire Indian countryside, this leads to an impression, that a village as a social and cultural unit possesses a basically uniform organisation and structure of values all over India. This would obviously be an oversimplified presentation of a rather complex situation. For a proper understanding of their social structure as well as their problems, it is necessary to classify them into clearly distinguishable types on the following criteria : (1) size, population and land area, (2) ethnic composition and caste constitution, (3) pattern of land ownership, (4) structure of authority and power hierarchy, (5) degree of isolation, and (6) local traditions.

1. *Size, population and land area* : Each culture area of India has its own nomenclature to classify the villages in respect of their size and population. There are three types : (a) hut, (b) larger hamlet, (c) village proper. The differences between these rural settlements are not confined only to their size and population. All these can be classified as belonging to the folk society, but they differ greatly in their internal organisation and economic self-sufficiency, etc.

Division of labour in the community is governed to a very great extent by traditional caste occupations. Co-operative labour of a number of different castes is required not only for agricultural activities but also for socio-religious life. Because of its multi-caste constitution, larger population and greater complexity of internal problems, the organisation of the larger village is often different from that of the smaller villages.

2. *Ethnic composition and caste constitution* : The ethnic and linguistic composition of a village, as well as its caste constitution also determine its character. A tribal village is often unitary in respect of its authority structure. On the other hand, in the case of a caste village it is bound to be different which has a mixed population of castes or of two different groups speaking different languages and the nature of its internal organisation of authority. If the diverse elements of its population have equal strength it generally has a federal type of organisation. In areas where there are intense or even pronounced intercaste rivalries and tensions, the caste composition of the village will largely determine its pattern of intergroup adjustment.

3. *Pattern of land ownership* : It goes without saying that in an agricultural country land must be fixed and under private ownership. Possession of land in India has not only been an economic and prestige issue but also a social one. Where all the land belongs to the landlord, the organisation of the village is different from that of a village inhabited by proprietary tenants. The general ratio of land distribution between castes and families, has vital influence in the nature of village organisation.

4. *Structure of authority and power heirarchy* : No village in India is completely autonomous and independent for it is always one unit in a social system. It is a part of an organised political society. An individual is not the member of a village community alone, he also belongs to a caste, religious group or tribe which has a wider territorial spread. These units have their own organisation and administration. Politically, however, they are under the legislature, executive and judicial authority of the Indian union. With a view to reviving village self government, village councils

are being established with recognised legal powers.

5. *Degree of isolation* : Nearness or isolation from large administrative or industrial centres also has a bearing on the nature of the village and of its view of the world.

6. *Local tradition* : Lastly, village settlements are governed by certain traditions, regional and local. The dress, speech, manners as well as the layout of the village follow the prescribed patterns of the culture area. Thus, in different areas we can also look forward to diversity in village organisation. But apart from these regional variations villages have a corporate unity and each one possesses an individuality of its own. Some are regarded as peaceful, some difficult. Co-operativeness or its absence may characterise some villages.

In view of the forces operating as above, it is difficult to regard any one village as typical of rural India as a whole. In fact, such a village could hardly be regarded as a representative even of its culture area except only in a general way. The problem before the sociologist is therefore a complex one and what we need today is a series of studies of village communities from different parts of the country covering the many divergent patterns of organisation. However, the following features characterise a very large number of villages in several parts of India :

(1) *Separate and distinct unit* : As a territorial, as well as social, economic and ritual unit, the village is a separate and distinct entity. The residents of this settlement recognise their corporate identity and it is recognised by others.

(2) *Composite population* : These settlements have a composite population comprising of a number of groups belonging to different castes and religious groups. This system of co-operative labour based on a pattern of inter-caste relations, approved by tradition is not confined only to economic activities, but also extends to ceremonial and ritual life. The hierarchical organisation of castes within the community is also fixed in the structural patterns of rural India.

(3) *Reciprocal obligations* : The members of this local group are bound together by ties of mutual and reciprocal obligations. Interpersonal and intergroup relations in village affairs are governed by an established usage and social ethos. Breaches of the norms

of the community and its established usage are dealt with either by the village elders or the village council.

North and South Indian Village

Writers like Maine have distinguished between two types of villages in India — the "joint" and the "severality". The first type prevails in the North-West Frontier province, the Punjab and the Uttar Pradesh, and the second in Peninsular India. The "Joint type" may be further divided into the "Pattidari" and "Zamindari" sub-types, in both of which the village lands constitute the joint property of an organised proprietary body. But while in the Pattidari system the joint families constituting the property body own separate shares in the cultivable land and hold the waste and pasture land in common, in the Zamindari system, all the land is held and managed in common and not divided.

In the "severality" or ryotwari villages common in South India, the unit of land revenue is not the village, but the holding of each land-holder, which is separately assessed, and each land-holder is individually responsible for its payment. There is no waste land held in common which can be divided if required for cultivation though there may be common right of use in such land for growing and collecting fuel.

As a general rule in Northern village communities a single village consists of a single caste group only unlike the typical Southern village where a village represents all the divisions of caste existing in a rank-order. For instance, among the *gaddi* villages in the Himalayas, each village consists almost entirely of one caste, all Rajput or all Brahmin. There are no castes other than these and there is practically none of that occupational specialisation found in the South Indian villages. The one exception to this rule is that only Brahmins can be "purohits". All castes other than Brahmins and even some of them, will eat meat freely and drink *Sur*, a kind of mild beer. There are no shoemakers other than immigrant *Holeyas* of the neighbouring village. About 90 percent of the people in

this village are either Brahmins or Rajputs and since most castes live in separate villages, there is very little intimate contact between different castes as has been described for the Mysore village of Rampura by M. N. Srinivas. All the villages in South India, of which Rampura is a typical example, are composed of various caste divisions and are essentially interdependent. This interdependence leads to a lot of interaction among the castes, unlike in North India. This interdependence is an important aspect of the caste system in South India as is seen in the day-to-day matters and is prominent in ritual and other important occupations. M. N. Srinivas describes a wedding in Rampura village where all the castes have to co-operate. The Brahmin is the priest, the carpenter puts the pendal, the goldsmith makes the ornaments, the oilman supplies oil for the lamps and cooking, *Banajigas* (traders) supply the provisions, the *Madas* the baskets, and the *Holeyas* (untouchables) perform menial tasks and make a pair of sandals for the groom.

In spite of the fact that most of the villages in North India consist of one caste only, caste consciousness is much stronger than village consciousness. It is difficult to find a wife outside one's own *gotra* in the village; the result is that there are multitudes of inter-village official links. In south peninsular India a man marries outside the village. In U.P. the average distance of marriage is 12 miles while in Punjab, two third of the marriages have taken place within villages between 4 and 12 miles from each other. Village exogamy in the North is combined with hypergamy; for example, village A only receives brides from B, but does not return the compliment. One of the effects of village exogamy and hypergamy is to spatially widen the range of ties. The ties are not repetitive, but extensive. An exactly opposite principle obtains in peninsular India. The preference for marriage with certain near relatives such as cross-cousins and cross-nieces has a limiting effect on the social space of the peasant. Such relatives often live in the same or nearby village. Intensification is the operative principle in South India whereas extension is the principle in the North.

In marriages, Northern India is oriented towards being strongly patrilocal. The family and village to which one gives a daughter

thereby becomes "high" or "respected", the family and village from which one takes a bride is "low". To a family standing in "high" relationship to one's own, one gives gifts, deference and ceremonial service; from a family standing in "low" relationship, one demands things. Additional marriages linking the same pairs of villages and bringing or sending more women in the established direction are desired. But an exchange of a sister for a wife, or any other reversal of direction of marriage, is unthinkable.

As in all parts of South India, the village temple dramatises the separateness as well as the interdependence between the caste groups and the need for their co-operation. Events relating to the welfare of the village as a whole like the institution of the "Grama devata" or village deity in Kumbapettai of Tanjore demands the co-operation of the various caste groups like the Konar, Adi Dravidas as well as the Brahmins. Households of all castes propitiate her in terms of their particular rituals. In recent years, since new courses of diverse non-Brahmin castes came to Kumbapettai, there have been disputes concerning precedence in the rites. Once these are settled, the rank of a particular family in the total village structure becomes publicly accepted. In the North, however, ceremonial occasions provide many approved contexts for brief conventional gatherings among persons of disparate formal affiliation. Family ceremonies, especially the ceremonies leading up to the marriage, require the most intense and extensive participation beyond the bounds of kinship; but they are no doubt limited in the extent of frequency as compared to the South.

Speaking of caste, the North signified as a political system. As F. G. Bailey remarks about a Oriya hill village, in the original village the relationship between castes was not simply one of ritual practice, the divisions of wealth and political power followed the same lines as caste divisions except for the family of Brahmins. The warriors were at the head of the caste ritual hierarchy as they were the wealthy class in the village; and they had the political power. Caste, in short, functioned as a political system. In contrast, in the Southern village communities caste was a ritual hierarchy though in recent times the advancements in social ranking have been affected by the increase in wealth and land-holdings of

the lower castes. Caste here is a socio-ritual ranking in terms of specialised occupations.

M. N. Srinivas suggests that the interdependence of castes in the Southern villages leads to the "vertical unity of many castes" or contrasts it with the "horizontal unity of castes" in which caste alliances go beyond the village of the North. The Northern villages being exogamous, horizontal unity is the result. Cross-village ties may, indeed, become so strong that village unity suffers. Miller has pointed out that it is difficult to speak of a clearly demarcated village community today in horizontally united villages since the vertical system of rights and obligations between castes is not confined to the village alone.

These differences in the North and South Indian village communities should not, however, blind us to the essential unity of the Indian village as a single rural entity as has been discussed in the beginning of this chapter.

Village Life in India and the West

The difference in the cultures of the East and West is reflected in the villages of the East and West. Though the rural societies both in East and West are predominantly agrarian, we find considerable differences between Indian villages and their Western counterparts. Besides the geographic factor, which has paramount importance in determining the nature and structure of a village, the social structure, economic conditions, political situation and a number of other factors determine the nature and character of a village. A comparative study of the Indian and the Western villages will reveal the differences between the two. Such a study will also reveal the elements, conditions or factors which affect the Rural Dynamics, that is, we shall know the correlation of causes and effects, i.e., what conditions produce what effects. In his famous book, *Village Life in Northern India*, Lewis has made a comparative study of an Indian village, Rampur near Delhi, with a Mexican village, Tepoztlan. Lewis has found that the differences between the two are more vital than similarities. A review of

Lewis's findings will make abundantly clear the differences between Indian and Western villages. Tepoztlan is situated 60 miles south of Mexico city, the capital of Mexico. The population of this village is 3500 and it was established about 2,000 years ago. Rampur is 15 miles from Delhi and has a population of 1100. The people of this village subscribe to the Hindu faith, whereas people of Tepoztlan are Catholic Christians.

While the villagers of Rampur speak Hindi, those of Tepoztlan speak two languages. About half of Tepoztlans are bilingual. About 750 years ago, a Jat King, had conquered Rampur and since then it is a jat dominated village. The majority of the Rampur population belong to Jat community. Hindi spoken in Rampur is influenced by the Punjabi language. A few persons in Rampur can speak English.

Both Rampur and Tepoztlan are peasant societies as majority of the population of both villages is engaged in the profession of agriculture. Both villages are connected with the state through the district and are subject to the laws of the land. That is, both villages have civilized society and not a primitive society. Both, again, are connected with the neighbouring villages and influenced by them, yet both have certain distinctive elements of their respective cultures. In both villages, primitive agricultural implements are used, that is, sophisticated modern implements are not common in these villages. The main implements used for agriculture are the plough and oxen. Both villages are primarily agriculturist and live on farm produce and dairy products. In both villages the rates of illiteracy and infant mortality are very high and the standard of living is very low. In both villages the goods are exchanged and the medium of exchange is currency notes and coins. In both villages a mixed feeling of well and ill-disposition towards the government is found. This is so because both villages have had a long spell of foreign domination and rule. The chief points of differences between the two villages, symbolic of East and West, are the following :

1. *Structural difference* : There is difference in the structure and layout of Rampur and Tepoztlan. Rampur is not built to any plan. Tepoztlan, on the other hand, like most Western villages,

is built to a plan. Its layout is orderly and its streets meet each other at right angles. The streets are broad and well-laid. Tepoztlan has one central church. It has its own market, official buildings and a public park. Rampur, unlike Tepoztlan, is ill-laid out and housing is disorderly. The houses in Rampur are huddled together and ventilation in these is poor. The houses in Rampur are not sufficiently commodious and, consequently, there is not enough space to live in. On the other hand, the houses in Tepoztlan are airy and commodious. Whereas, in Rampur, men and beasts usually sleep under the same roof, in Tepoztlan we find a small garden in front of each house where cattle is lodged. There is no housing problem in Tepoztlan, it is possible to find a few vacant houses. Like all villages in the West, we find that the quarters for male and female are not separate but mixed; in Rampur these are separate.

2. *Difference in agriculture* : As described, agriculture is the main profession in the two villages. In Rampur, agriculture is more intensive than in Tepoztlan. About 90 per cent of area of Rampur is used for agriculture. On the contrary, only 15 per cent of the area of Tepoztlan is used for agriculture. Whereas in Rampur a number of crops are taken per year, in Tepoztlan only one crop is taken in a year. Due to good irrigation facilities in Rampur about 1/5th of the total area yields two crops per year, but, on account of poor irrigation facilities in Tepoztlan, only one crop in a year is possible. The difference in the irrigation facilities between Rampur and Tepoztlan cannot be generalized. As a matter of fact, the actual affairs with regard to Eastern and Western villages are quite opposite of one obtaining in Rampur versus Tepoztlan pair. The irrigation facilities in the West are, on the whole, much better than in India. Tepoztlan is an exception to the general rule. The farmer in the West, on the whole, takes a higher yield and employs sophisticated agricultural implements.

3. *Difference in land* : The topographical differences between Tepoztlan and Rampur are fairly representative of differences between Western and Eastern villages in respect of land. Whereas nearby Tepoztlan there are green pastures and forests, there is neither green pasture nor any jungle near Rampur. This is why in Rampur and other Indian villages there is acute shortage of firewood

and, therefore, cowdung is used for fuel purposes instead of manure. On the other hand, there is plenty of firewood available in Tepoztlan and the entire cowdung is used as manure.

4. *Private and public land* : In both Rampur and Tepoztlan we find both kinds of land — private and public. But whereas in Tepoztlan every individual has equal right over the public land and can use it freely without any let or hindrance, in Rampur, on the contrary, certain castes are debarred from the use of public land. While 80 per cent of the total land in Tepoztlan is public, only 7 per cent of the land in Rampur is public and this includes the village tank, roads and barren land. Compared to India, we find a far greater proportion of land in the West public. This is due to the greater area of land as also due to improved public utilities like roads and sanitation. There are no uneconomic holdings in the West. Compared to about 80 per cent of Indian population engaged in agriculture, only 15 per cent of the Western population is engaged in agriculture. Naturally, therefore, each agriculturist in the West has large holdings. In both villages, there are disputes over public land, though the causes in the two cases are quite different. In India, the quarrels over public land are due to the fact that some families try to snatch or usurp the public land, while in Tepoztlan the cause of the quarrel is usually the contending claims over public land by some families.

In Tepoztlan, the area of land per head is 75 acres, whereas in Rampur it is a paltry 1.5 acres. As a rule, the land area per head is far greater in Western villages than in the Indian villages. Besides more land, the Western farmer enjoys the facilities of green pastures and forests. As a consequence, he is much more well off than his Indian counterpart. But as far as the individual and private ownership of land is concerned, a higher percentage of land is under private ownership in India than in the West.

While 36 per cent of the families in Tepoztlan have private ownership of the land, 52 per cent of the Rampur families possess their own land. The socio-economic conditions of those who do not own land are much better in the West than in India. In the West, a landless villager can freely use public land and pastures, while in India such a person has no option but become a labourer.

Though the land-holdings in Tepoztlan are small this is not the case with other villages in the West. The similarity in regard to land-holdings in Tepoztlan and Rampur is typical and cannot therefore justify a general conclusion. What can be said at best is that in certain villages in the West the conditions are rather like those obtaining in India.

5. *Professions* : About 90 per cent of Tepoztlan families are engaged in agriculture. The number of those engaged in agriculture in Rampur is 53 per cent. Like other Indian villages, in Rampur there are washermen, barbers, potters, etc. In Western villages, however, there are not so many professions. The number of landless labourers is very high in India but very low in the West.

6. *Animal husbandry* : In India, as well as in the West, cattle are bred and reared. But whereas in the West cattle breeding is mainly done for the purposes of food, that is, obtaining meat, in India, on account of religious beliefs, animals are not primarily bred for feeding. In fact meat is sparingly consumed in India. Though there is ample pasture ground in Tepoztlan the number of animals being bred is relatively less. In India, on the other hand, the number of livestock is relatively very high but their condition is very poor. In India milch animals yield about $\frac{1}{4}$ th of milk produced by their Western counterparts. The reason for the great number of livestock in India is that animals are used for ploughing the fields, whereas in West agriculture is mechanized and, therefore, the primary use of animals is for milk and meat.

7. *Social structure* : The social structure is based on culture. With changes in the culture, the social structure also undergoes corresponding changes. As there are fundamental differences between the Western and the Indian cultures, the social structures of the Western and Indian villages are fundamentally different. For example, in Indian villages, blood relationship plays a very crucial role. Not only is family based on blood relationship, but a number of families in a village are closely linked by blood relationship. On the other hand, Western social structure is based on class rather than blood relationship. Therefore, while Indian village society is based on caste structure and caste is determined by birth, in Western village we find either no social class stratification or

the classes are based on profession. We find much less economic and social differences among various classes in the Western villages than in Indian villages, though we find in Indian villages a sense of fraternity not to be found in the West. The evil of untouchability is of course peculiar to India and is not to be found in the West where equality of men is emphasized.

8. *Social stratification* : As there is no caste system in the Western villages, the relationship amongst villagers is democratic and the sense of community is very high. But in spite of the democratic character and high community sense found in Western villages, the relations among individuals are becoming increasingly impersonal, whereas in spite of the casteism of Indian villages, the relations among villagers are still personal and intimate in India. However, there is no gainsaying the fact that casteism and presence of communities pulling in opposite directions is inimical to social structure. The fact that Western society is democratic and free from casteism does not mean that there are no classes in the Western society and that it is wholly classless. In fact, classes are formed on regional, religious or cultural bases; but the peculiar features of casteism like restrictions on marriage, sharing of food and mixing up during festivals, etc. are to be found in Indian society only and not in the Western Society.

9. *Social dynamics* : In both Rampur and Tepoztlan are found a number of groups. But whereas groups in Tepoztlan are not well organized, these are very well-organized in Rampur. In India the groups are formed to protect and preserve social and economic interests of groups and there is tension among these. On the other hand, groups in West are formed mostly on political basis and conflicts among them are politically motivated.

10. *Family structural differences* : In the West we find small family units of husband, wife and their small children. There is no joint family system in the West and as and when a son marries he sets up a separate home. On the other hand, we find joint families in India. The Indian family does not consist of husband and wife but includes parents and brothers of the husband and may sometimes include uncles even. In Indian villages the more numerous a family the higher is its prestige. The chiefs of large

families find it easy to become leaders in the village. The relations of a family are spread over far-flung villages as the practice of exogamic marriages prevails in India.

11. *Communal feeling and village organisation* : As we have said earlier, a high sense of community or strong communal feelings are found in Western villages. On account of this the residents of a village in the West are dedicated to communal welfare and think in terms of and act in ways beneficial to their village as a whole. On the other hand, it is the caste that predominates the rural life in India. In elections to panchayats and assemblies, an appeal to caste interests is made and usually the pattern of voting is determined by the caste structure of the village. From the legal and constitutional point of view, villages are regarded as corporate bodies in West and in India and are therefore legal persons so that a village can be a plaintiff or defendant in court cases. Both in India and the West, villagers face external dangers as one man. This disposition of villagers can be utilized for effective community development. If villagers as a whole are given a common aim and ideal, they can be made to work hard for their realization. Thus villages provide great potential for useful development.

12. *Political conditions and leadership* : The villages in the West are much better organized politically than the Indian villages. However, insofar as local self-government is concerned, Indian villages are not far behind their Western counterparts. Panchayats in India are well-developed institutions. Moreover, they have basis in Indian history and are wholly indigenous in character. If these are given full freedom to function and develop and governments assist them properly there is no reason for their lagging behind in any respect in matters of political organization and self-government. However, the state of affairs at the moment is not very encouraging. Indeed, whereas the village leaders in the West represent whole of the village, this is not the case in India. In India each leader represents his own group and for any scheme concerning whole of the village it becomes necessary to achieve a consensus among the leaders of different groups. On account of this the work of community development becomes difficult; but a redeeming feature of the situation is that various groups are closely knit in coherent

units so that once a consensus among various groups is obtained there is no further hindrance or hurdle in the way of development. As a matter of fact, the community sense and feeling, though covering the whole village, are not very intense in Tepoztlan whereas these are very intense in Rampur though confined to groups and not extending to the whole village. In India, on account of exogamy, there is friendship among various villages because there are marital bonds between most of them. As endogamous and not exogamous marriage is practised in Western villages, bonds between various villages are not very strong.

13. *Inter-village relations* : Though both in India and the West villages are part of a district and state, the Western villages are more independent and self-sufficient than Indian villages. The relationship of villages with district and state is federal in character in the West. In India villages are parts of the districts and states and much more dependent than their Western counterparts. In as much as exogamy is practised in India we find close bonds and relations among different villages. In the West marriages take place within the village and therefore there is no possibility of marital bonds between different villages.

14. *The personality of a village* : It is a commonplace fact that Indian villages are poor and much more squalid and unhygienic than their Western counterparts. But due to strong impress of culture on their character, they appear to be generous, hospitable, contented and happy. The children in an Indian village are filthier and more starved than in the West but they appear to be more contented and satisfied than their Western counterparts. Womenfolk of Indian villages are neither depressed nor underdogs; they in fact are hard working and quite assertive. In work efficiency and capacity they are second to none. As regards health and disease, conditions are worse in India than in the West. Infant mortality is high in India and average age is also low. In spite of this there is no expression of despondency on the faces of Indian villagers. Indian villagers are deeply influenced by Indian culture and on account of this display greater conviviality than the villagers of the West. The rate of literacy is very low in India. Gregariousness is natural to an Indian villager, he cannot survive in isolation. Everywhere we find crowding of children, women or men. Indian women use more ornaments than

their Western counterparts though their economic condition is not as good as that of their Western sisters. A comparative study of villages of India and the West shows up relative cultural differences; other differences are due to economic factors. With an improvement in economic conditions Indian villages will come along very well and will not lag behind Western villages in any respect.

Chapter VII

MEDIEVAL SOCIAL REFORM MOVEMENTS

Indian society, though accused of being static, has been dynamic. Reform movements in Indian society emerged in response to new challenges. In medieval times the reform movement emerged as Bhakti movement and later on gave rise to Buddhism and Jainism. How this came about is the theme of this Chapter.

Bhakti Movement

The tradition of devotion and worship crystallised immediately after the composition of the *Bhagwad Gita* and has since continued in northern as well as southern India. Bhagvat cult had gained considerable popularity by the time the Maurya period came to an end and this cult propagated the value and importance of devotion. Devotion is more popular in Northern India than in any other part of the country, a fact which is substantiated by a couplet found in the Bhagavat and Padma Purana. Literally translated, the couplet means that devotion says, "I was born in Dravid land, nourished in Karnataka, lived for some time in Maharashtra and grew old in Gujarat." It is believed that both the Bhagvat Purana and Padma Purana were composed around the eighth century, and from this it is deduced that during the eighth and ninth centuries devotion was in its heyday. Had this not been so the authors of the Purana would not have mentioned it.

A detailed description of worship is provided in the Bhagvat Purana which was written in A.D. 900. Some scholars raise an objection and say that there is no definite evidence of the progress

of worship between Gita and the Bhagvat. The objection is important because the period between the composition of these two texts is very long. There can be no satisfactory answer to this objection because, in fact, the literature between these two landmarks is sketchy and definitely not informative. Yet this does not imply that the devotion movement had come to a complete stop in this intervening period. R.D.S. Dinakar is of the opinion that the evidence available indicates that, while in the northern part of the country credited saints were criticising the Vedas, inducing the people to reject the *varnasbram*, *yagyas*, idol worship and all trappings of the older religion, in southern India the Nayanmara and Alvar saints were enrapturing the population with their worship of Vishnu and Krishna. These saints provide the missing link between the Bhagwad Gita and the Bhagvat as well as between Bhagwad Gita and Ramanuj. The philosophy of devotion came to the saints through their *Tamil Prabandham*, and possibly this text is the source of inspiration for the Bhagvat also.

One main characteristic of the Alvar saints was their mysticism. Although they had accepted all the conventional modes of worship, such as taking refuge in God, complete confidence in God, sacrificing oneself to the will of God, yet in many ways their worship rose above the practical level. This shortcoming in their system was rather glaring and the Vaishnava Acharayas tried to remove it. In this connection it must be pointed out that the Vaishnava Acharayas were interested in knowledge as well as in serious devotion, since they also believed that identification with God is possible only through worship. They placed worship above both knowledge and deeds. Among the more important of such saints were Ramanuja, Nimbarkacharya and Vallabhacharya.

The saints lived in a period when Hindus were under attack from the Yavanas. When Hindus had been deprived of their independence by the Muslims, they had also lost much of their past glory and faith in the future, and the gloom had been deepened when repeated efforts at regaining their freedom had come to nought. They could do nothing but watch with sorrow when their idols were smashed in their presence.

From the religious standpoint a study of medieval period reveals

that even before the Bhakti movement became a force, propogation and preaching was already being done in the eastern and western parts by the Nagas, Siddhas and Kapalikas. They had failed to understand the mixed religion which confused *karma*, knowledge and worship. This accounts for the absence of ritual in the religious field, the effort to find eternity and God within themselves, and to develop supernatural powers. The people in general were overawed and impressed by these supernatural powers and were inclined to shower respect on yogis and saints. On the other hand, pundits who were acquainted with the scriptures were not in the least influenced by these religious performers. The Bhakti movement developed along the line of the scriptures on account of the influence of Upanishads, Bhagwad Gita and other religious texts. This sense of devotion and worship was at its strongest in the south, where religious fervour grew to a remarkable extent, and it submerged the northern part of the country as well. Ramanujacharya, Nimbarkacharya, Vallabhacharya and other religious philosophers helped to raise the spirit of the Hindu community which was steadily bowing down before the oppression and disgrace heaped upon it by the Muslims. It helped to bring the Hindus out of the emotional torpor which had settled so heavily upon them and had forced them to withdraw from the life around them.

Medieval Bhakti Literature

Upto the time of these great saints all Bhakti literature had been written in Sanskrit. The eleventh century *Gita Govind* of Jaidev was written in Sanskrit. In the twelfth century the Bengali poet Vidyapati followed the example of Jaidev, wrote much devotional poetry and thus brought the religious movement closer to the masses. He can be treated as the first poet of the Bhakti period, as also he is the first poet to communicate with the masses by substituting Sanskrit with Hindi. All that has been said about the devotional philosophers of the past indicates that they had not succeeded in communicating with the general public since they had not adopted Hindi. Jayasi and Tulsi wrote in the Avadhi language. Surdas's work *surasagar* is in Brij Bhasha. Worship was made popular through the efforts of different writers such as Tukaram and Namdev who wrote in Marathi, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu in Bengali and the

Alvar Nayanmar saints who wrote in Tamil. It was their use of the vernacular which helped the general public assimilate their poetry into folklore of each place.

Ramanuja, Vallabh, Ramanand, Madhva, and Nimbark came forward with a fresh interpretation of God's form as beauty, truth and goodness at the time when the Hindu community had adopted an escapist approach in the face of increasing Muslim oppression. The immediate gain of such a step was that it helped to bring before the religious thinkers the figure of God with positive qualities, who could be the object of devotion and worship, accessible to man, willing to listen to his wailing, and inclined to put in a helping hand. Besides, the scholarly individual was faced with two conceptions of Brahman — one with qualities and the other completely devoid of them. But the qualityless Brahman was a useful asset because it helped to develop a common form of devotion for both Hindus and Muslims whereas the Brahman with attributes could be worshipped only by the Vaishnavas since it was propitiated by the Vaishnava saints and mendicants.

Brahman without Attributes

The religious principles propagated by the Nath sect in the field of religion helped to inaugurate a sense of unity between the Hindus and Muslims. Caste system was the only form of social organisation in the period, and the masses were divided into lower and higher classes. Individuals of the higher castes, as a general rule, were inclined to ride rough shod over the lower classes, and, to take advantage of this situation, bigotry in the lower classes arose in order to bring about a new unity. Kabir, the disciple of Ramanand, continued the good work done by the Nath sect. Into the tenets of the Nath sect of worship and devotion he introduced the element of love and thus made it possible for the people to pray to the deity without attributes and qualities. Kabir was the first poet of this movement. Kabir's own sect of worshippers is devoted to Brahman without attributes and assimilates and makes use of a variety of religious sources in the Nath sect, Vaishnava sect, the Sufi sect and numerous other influences from the Puranas. This movement which had its beginnings in the philosophy of the

Nath sect later on divided into two separate forms — path of knowledge and the path of love.

Brahman with Attributes

Kabir headed the sect which placed its faith in knowledge. He arrived at a time when Hindu society was in shambles, with the Muslims ruling the roost. Hindus in general could not see any ray of hope in a moment when everything was growing dark. Swami Ramanand of Banaras, took up the challenge and taking up the thread of Ramanuja's theory of a Brahman with attributes, tried to hold Hindu society together through the worship of a single deity with attributes. He is responsible for starting the movement of devotion or worship in Northern India. He was born in the beginning of the 15th century. He travelled over the country and thereby managed to develop a very liberal attitude, which could not envisage the limitations of caste or creed. He included members of every caste in his group. On the other hand, Tulsidas advised the people that they should do nothing to disturb their unity and that they should worship Rama and maintain the caste system.

Leaders are not born but made is a common enough cliché. It is equally true that they are born in a set of circumstances that inevitably shape them as leaders. At a time when Hindu religion had become fanatic and dogmatic, incapable of change, unnecessarily rigid, when the extreme elaboration of ritual and complete absence of obvious sincerity tended to drive one away from religion, there grew up a group of men who wanted to see man in his own image once again and to see humanity prevail once again in the place of inhuman cruelty and animalism that went about in the cloak of religion. It was a period of religious fanaticism, shared equally by the Hindus and the Muslims, each group developing rituals that did nothing but hinder all progress in the social field.

When the religious thinkers and leaders saw the state of society around them, they felt impelled to root out all the evil practices, rituals, hypocracies and the rest on which they could lay their hands. Both Hindu and Muslim religious reformers participated in this effort to put an end to the social and religious inequality that existed in both societies, and in their desire to see good reign in place of

evil they did admirable work in bringing the two religions closer together. Most of their messages to their listeners were centred round the notion of equality of man and man, that the ability to do good is not inherited. Anyone who does good is a Brahmin. If the Shudra fashions his deeds after the best of Brahmins he deserves as much respect as the Brahmin does. Many of these saints were themselves born in the lower castes and were, therefore, perfectly aware of the disparity that existed between the different strata of society. Kabir did commendable work in this direction. He launched very vigorous verbal attacks on all that was wrong in both the religions and pointed out that deeds make a man, irrespective of the place and circumstances of birth. He preached precisely the same thing to every audience without discriminating between one group and another, one community and another. Unfortunately, the people in general at that time were not a very intelligent and thoughtful group, and blindly followed the instructions of their Pundits and Maulvis. It was the task of the saints to point out that the external show of reverence and devotion was of no use, that liberation could not come by sacrificing animals, performing *yagyas* and *havans*, asking the assistance of the Pundits and the Maulvis. What is required for liberation from this world is love for mankind, love for God and devotion to Him. Religious liberality, as opposed to dogmatic religiosity, was another characteristic of these saints. It is for this reason that the Shaiva and the Vaishnava sects continued to progress simultaneously during this period.

Shaivism

Shiva worship took on the form of a religious sect in the first few centuries after Christ. The fact that during the Ramayana and Mahabharata period Shiva worship had a strong hold on the imagination of the people is proved by numerous references to him in the former work. Such incidents as Shiva's marriage, his destruction of Kamadeva, his siring of Kartikeya, the submerging of Ganges and his drinking of venom when the sea was churned, all point to the importance of Shiva. Each of these incidents find a place in the Ramayana, but it is in the Mahabharata that the tales are given

their full value. At one stage there is a description of Rama, the incarnation of Vishnu, praying to Shiva. This tends to prove that the author of the Ramayana had considerable faith in the unity of the Shaiva and Vaishnava sects. In terms of history, it was Megasthenes who made first mention of Shaiva religion, and it appears that the Greek name Dyonisius is only a modified form of Shiva. Patanjali has written that the Maurya kings ordered the manufacture of the figures of Shiva and Kartikeya and to sell them. The coins issued by the Kushana kings indicate that they also had faith in Shaiva sect, and they were followed in this by the Hun Kings. Mihirkul was a fanatic follower of the Shaiva religion. It seems that Shaiva cult found considerable following not only in India but also in the neighbouring countries. During the Rajput period the cult was propagated considerably in Northern India, while in the South it prospered through the efforts of the Nayanmara saints and the Pallava and Chola kings.

Schools of Shaiva Cult

Somewhere around the third century after Christ four distinct schools of Shaiva cult came into prominence — the Pashupat, Shaiva, Kapalika and Kalmukh. It is believed that the Pashupat sect is the most ancient. Dr. Bhandarakar has expressed his opinion that this sect was probably born during the second century B.C. It finds mention in the Mahabharata along with the other schools such as Sankhya, Yoga and Panchratra, and it is contended in that work that this particular sect was established by Shiva himself. Followers of each of the sects believe that Shiva himself was the founder of their respective school. In the Linga and Vayu Puranas it is forecast that Shiva would be reincarnated in the form of Lakulisha to propagate his own religion and as this particular name has occurred in some historical documents, it appears the statement of the Puranas might have some element of truth in it.

Principles of the Shaiva Cult

Of the four different schools of this religion mentioned before, the Pashupat school believes that the following five functions are of major importance : (1) *partantra karya*, meaning activity dependent upon others, (2) *svatantra karya*, meaning actions independent of

others; (3) *yoga*, which is of particular importance for the Shaiva cult in as much that yogic actions alone can help control the mind and help the worshipper to achieve revelation quickly, (4) *vidhi*, or method, implying the method by which the worshipper can reach his God Shiva in the shortest possible time — the methods being smearing the body with ashes, imitating the honking or bellowing of a bull, reciting the mantras, etc., and (5) *dukhanta*, meaning the end or cessation of all pain and suffering. *Dukhanta* can take two forms : (1) *anaatamaka*, and (2) *saatamaka*. The former means nothing more than the cessation of pain while the latter term implies development of supernatural powers, such as the power of changing any living form, moving from one place to another in defiance of gravity, etc. People belonging to the Kapalika and the Kalamukha sects normally lived in or near cremation grounds and made a habit of partaking of meat, drink and other stronger intoxicants. Both from the religious and the philosophical standpoint the attainments of these sects were negligible.

Present form of the Shaiva Cult

Shiva's pashupati form assumed during the Indus civilization and the Shivaling were part of the common stock of knowledge. Additional knowledge is provided by the figures drawn on coins belonging to various dynasties which subsequently ruled over the country. During the period of the Maurya kings figures of Shiva were common. This sect continued to progress during the Gupta period, and with the growth of temples Shiva was provided with a human form. Later on, there appeared a tendency to substitute worship of Shivaling for worship of Shiva. Even today most of the idols found in Shiva temples show a great degree of resemblance but in some cases differences have crept in. At certain places one finds idols of Shiva with two, three or four faces. Shiva cult is an important part of the religious life of India, a remnant of the religious sect that had at one time spread over the entire expanse of the country.

Vaishnavism

Vaishnavism is a major sect or school of the traditional Hindu

religion, in which Lord Vishnu is believed to be the chief deity. He is worshipped, and his followers are called Vaishnavas. This sect is very ancient and it finds mention in Vedic literature also. It attaches great importance to worship or prayer, while it forbids animal sacrifice of any kind. Vaishnavism has also been called the Bhagwata sect. It accepts reincarnation. It is a simple and practical sect of Hindu religion, which accepts the possibility of salvation through worship.

Principles of Vaishnavism

Vaishnavism is a school which attaches importance to action and involvement, as opposed to renunciation, penance, physical torture and contemplation, all of which are rejected by it. It accepts Vishnu as the highest deity, and it places the greatest emphasis upon worship as the way to God. Some of its main principles are as follows :

(a) *Incarnation* : In this sect, incarnations are accepted as reality. In the Bhagwat Purana, 22 incarnations of Lord Vishnu are mentioned while in the Mahabharata there is mention of 17 incarnations of the same deity.

(b) *Importance of action and involvement* : Vaishnavism follows the path of involvement, and it emphasizes the importance of action. It is not in favour of rigorous contemplation, meditation and renunciation.

(c) *Belief in rebirth* : Vaishnavism believes in the theory of rebirth.

(d) *Worship and charity* : This sect requires the worship of Lord Vishnu and his incarnations. It also ordains idol worship. Apart from worship, charity is also deemed to be a part of religion. Besides, followers of this cult also indulge in religious singing of psalms, etc.

Antiquity of Vaishnava Cult

It is easily one of the oldest of Hindu cults. The term is derived from the word Vishnu, the name of one of the deities of Hindu religion. Obviously, the object of worship in this sect is Vishnu, who found considerable importance in the Puranic literature. It is also in the Puranas that he is first seen as an object of collective worship. In the Rig Veda the name Vishnu is used to mean

the sun, and it is in the incarnation of Upendra that Vishnu is worshipped in the Rig Veda. Indications of the greatness of Vishnu are to be found in the Rig Veda itself, while in the post-Vedic period a very large proportion of the population had turned into worshippers of Vishnu. Despite all this it is difficult to state with certainty that the Vaishnava sect had developed into an independent cult in the Vedic period.

Origin of Vaishnava Cult

By the sixth century B.C. the Vaishnava cult had developed into a religious sect. It is established that Panini who lived at that time knew of the God Vasudev. Megasthenes, the Greek ambassador during the third century, had seen the Shaursens of Mathura praying to Krishna. In the second century B.C. Vasudev was the object of worship for Patanjali. It appears that the Vaishnava sect had its origin in a period of religious turmoil and uncertainty similar to the one that had given birth to the Jain and Buddhist religions. It was, at the same time, a period of religious reform, and this is the reason why followers of the Vaishnava cult held it irreligious to offer animal sacrifices. Besides, Vaishnava cult gives secondary place to *yagyas* and attaches the greatest importance to worship of Vishnu.

Development of Vaishnava Cult

Vaishnava cult passed through numerous ups and downs in the course of its development. In the first stage of its development it came to be called the Bhagvat or Satvat cult. The Satvats or Yadavas prayed to Vasudev with a view to attaining the greatness of Bhagvad Gita, a form of worship which was given the name of Satvat or Bhagvat group. People in general had had more than enough of the complicated rituals of worship of the Brahamins and the antagonisms that had been generated by the Jains and Buddhists, and hence apathy towards *yagyas* and *karmakand* had set in. They, therefore, naturally felt attracted towards this newer and simpler form of worship since it involved neither intellectual ability nor any financial outlay. This Bhagvat group was established by Vasudev. Later on, in the Mahabharata and the Puranas, Vasudev came

to be called Krishna, and it is these works which indicate that Krishna was a historical personality. The Chandogya Upanishad also mentions one son of Devaki, and also that Sri Krishna was educated in the Karmakand by Angiras Rishi, which he put to practical use in the Gita. In this manner it is possible to calculate that Sri Krishna must have lived during the Upanishadic period. Some time later Sri Krishna became the object of worship and the Gita was based on his teachings. By this time the Bhagvat group had attained to the second stage of its development and it was in this stage that Sri Krishna was identified with God Vishnu. Another identification was carried out when Vasudev, Vishnu and Krishna were also equated with Narayana. Bhagvat group has also been called the Panchratra since the individual named Narayan had carried out a *yagya* called the Panchratra. Ever since, all individuals performing a similar ritual came to be called Panchratras. Narayan has been treated as omniscient where ever he has been mentioned in the Shatapatha Brahmana. But there are some doubts about the historical validity of Narayan's actual existence.

Spread of Vaishnava Cult

Since the Vaishnava cult finds no mention in Ashoka's sculptured plaques or in the list of religious movements provided in the *Angutar Nikaya*, it appears that during the reign of Ashoka the Vaishnava sect had yet to be recognised as a religious movement. But the fact that Panini was aware of it proves that it had definitely come into existence but had not become widely known. But when Megathenes arrived in Mathura it had come to the forefront while during second century B.C. it had achieved much popularity even with the Greeks living in the north-west. While the Gita and the Mahabharata were being written this sect was criticised but it became popular in the south and in the northern plains. People from abroad accepted this sect, one such individual being Heliodorus. The Kushana kings were also converted to it. By the time the Gupta kings took over, it had spread over all major parts of the country, and Gupta kings accepted it as the religion of the royal house. Their efforts helped to spread it further to Anam, Java, Cambodia and other islands.

Buddhism

During a walk outside his palace, Prince Siddhartha Gautama came upon an old person, a person who was ill, a dead body and a hermit, and was profoundly stirred by the sight whereupon he renounced his kingly pleasures and ventured forth in search of truth. He found the causes of suffering and the means of removing them. On obtaining this knowledge he was titled the 'Buddha'. This knowledge is comprehended in four Noble Truths.

The four noble truths are the truth about suffering, the truth about the causes of suffering, the truth about the cessation of suffering and the truth about the path of liberation. These four Noble Truths are the foundation on which Buddhist philosophy rests and they also reflect the entire cycle of Gautama's spiritual life originating in consciousness of suffering and culminating in the discovery of the means of escaping suffering. In this way Gautama's spiritualism is based on solid realism. It is this unique feature which is the reason for the wide popularity of his thoughts.

Eight-fold Path : From the philosophical and moral view, Buddha has adopted the middle path. There are two limits which the aspirant should never approach. On the one hand pleasures of sensual objects, interest in passions, a low, uncultured, deplorable and undirected pleasure seeking meant only for the low people, and on the other, the habit of suppressing the self, which is painful, worth discarding and useless. Buddha has discovered the middle path which opens the eyes, and which guides towards peace and insight, supreme wisdom and *nirvana*. Actually, it is only the noble eight-fold path.

(1) *Right Vision* : The first way in Buddha's eight-fold path is right vision. Ignorance generates a wrong view regarding the relation between the world and self, and man mistakes a transient, painful and unspiritual object for a permanent, blissful and spiritual one. The abandoning of this fallacious view and attaining to the real nature of objects is said to be right vision. In this way, unflinching meditation on the four noble truths is the proper way. This meditation takes one towards *nirvana*.

(2) *Right Resolve* : The second way is right resolve. The

determination to root out thoughts which entertain ill-will and harm towards others and discarding attachment to sensual pleasures, is right resolve. The noble truths can be profitable only if life is led according to them. Proper volition should be with a proper view. Proper volition includes sacrifice, benevolence and sympathy.

(3) *Right Speech* : The third way is right speech. As a first step, man should control his speech by right resolve. Right speech means avoidance of falsity, criticism, unlikable and false speech. Every man should avoid bad and adopt good speech. One word of solace is better than innumerable meaningless words.

(4) *Right conduct* : The fourth way is proper conduct, which means forbearing from activities like destruction of life, theft, sexuality, falsifying, excessive eating, visiting social recreations, artificial means of beauty, jewellery, use of comfortable beds and gold, etc. All these abstinences apply to hermits. But householders need follow only five of them. Ordinary people have a number of other rules of good conduct. Parents should protect their children from evil qualities and cultivate good qualities in them, and marry them off after their education is over. The offspring should make themselves noble by serving their aged parents. The students should study, respect their teachers, obey them and fulfil their needs. The teachers should behave lovingly towards them and perfect them in the arts and sciences by cultivating good habits in them. The husband should respect his wife, be faithful to her and look after her welfare. The wife should behave lovingly towards her husband, manage the home efficiently, be hospitable to all guests and exemplify marital fidelity. Continuing in the same vein, Buddha has given a detailed description of rules regulating mutual behaviour between various people related socially. He has preached the lesson of sacrifice, benevolence and sympathy to the multitude in its entirety. His rules and prescriptions aim at making both society and the individual happy. If these are considered, one cannot declare Buddha to be an escapist.

(5) *Right Livelihood* : Right livelihood means earning one's bread and butter by right means. Without it right activity cannot be fully practised. According to Buddha, one should not trade in weapons, animals, meat, wine, etc. It is never good for any person,

to earn his money, by unfair and bad means like pressure, fraud, bribe, extortion, chicanery, dacoity, etc.

(6) *Right Effort* : Along with the obedience of rules regarding vision, volition, speech, action and livelihood, it is also necessary to stop bad impressions and avoid bad feelings. Endeavouring to this end is called right effort. It includes self control, negation of sensuality, stopping bad thoughts, awakening good thoughts and concentrating the mind upon universal welfare. Four ways of restricting bad thoughts have been advocated :

(i) Meditate upon some good thought.

(ii) Study the results of acting upon bad thoughts.

(iii) Analyse the causes of bad thought and stop its results.

(iv) Control the mind by physical effort. Obedience of *dharma* depends upon the mind, upon the obedience of *dharma* is dependent the attainment of liberation. In this way, even a person who had made some progress along the spiritual path, needs proper exercise in order to eliminate the risk of a lapse in future.

(7) *Right Mindfulness* : Right mindfulness means the retention of the body, conscience, and mental state in their real form. Bad thoughts are thoughts which have lost their real form and, if actions take place according to them, pain ensues and the tendencies to bad thoughts get strengthened. Right mindfulness includes the remembering of impurities of the body, pleasure, nature of suffering, nature of pain, hatred, and doubt filled mind, five *skandhas*, senses, object of senses, means of liberation and the four noble truths. Right mindfulness destroys attachment and releases one from pain.

Gautama Buddha described right mindfulness meticulously. He preached that body should be treated as constituted of earth, water, fire and air, and is filled, it must be remembered, with deplorable things like bones, skin, intestines, spleen, urine, etc. One should see the burning of the body in a crematorium, its destruction, conversion to food for vultures and dogs and becoming dust. Remembering these truths makes one forget or lose love and attachment for one's own or another's body. Due to this the attachment for other bad tendencies is also destroyed. It results in complete lack of passion and elimination of pain. In this way, man avoids worldly attachment due to the effect of right mindfulness.

(8) *Right Concentration* : By pursuing the seven paths propounded above, man's tendencies of the *chitta* or mind are pacified and he becomes capable of right concentration. Before *nirvana* is attained, right concentration has four stages :

(i) In the first stage, the four noble truths are meditated upon with a calm mind. Pure and detached thought creates unique happiness.

(ii) In the second stage, efforts like meditation and reasoning become unnecessary, doubts are removed and faith in noble truths increases. Here intuition replaces thought. Profound contemplation results in peace and permanence in the mind. At the same time, bliss and peace are realised.

(iii) The third stage is one of indifference. Here the endeavour is to remove happiness and introduce indifference in the mind. In this the mind is in equilibrium, but one becomes indifferent to the happiness of concentration.

(iv) The stage of absolute peace is the fourth stage in which pleasure and pain are destroyed. In it the tendencies of the mind are negated. It is a state of perfect peace, perfect indifference and perfect negation. In it, pain is completely destroyed and *nirvana* obtained.

Sheel, Samadhi and Prajna

The eight-fold path of Buddha has three major parts — *Sheel*, concentration or *Samadhi* and *Prajna*. *Prajna* is real knowledge, superior to intellectual knowledge. Good conduct is impossible without real knowledge. On the other hand, perfection of knowledge too, is not possible without conduct. Accordingly, in accordance with the tradition of Indian Philosophy, Buddha looks upon *sheel* and *prajna* as complementary. *Prajna* is destructive of sexual and ignorant tendencies. *Prajna* awakens or fosters undisturbed concentration. The first seven laws of the eight-fold path guide one towards the perfection of concentration. Pursuing it leads to the evolution of *prajna* and *sheel*. Perfect *prajna*, perfect *sheel* and perfect peace spring immediately after *nirvana* is attained. In this

way, it is definitely wrong to consider *nirvana* to be an empty state. Besides preaching meditation on physical defects or bad feelings, Buddha has also stressed the adoption of friendliness towards every one, sympathy towards suffering and aloofness towards the bad. These four together are called "Brahma Vihara." Non-violence has major importance in the preaching of Buddha. Non-violence requires both sympathy and friendliness.

Buddha Sangha

After the death of Gautama the followers of his religion constituted the Sangha which met four times under circumstances mentioned below :

(1) Gautama passed away in 477 B.C. After that 500 Buddhist monks met at Rajgriha, the capital of Magadha, where it was decided to commit to memory the golden rules. Following this, the emperor of Magadha ordered that the rules should be preserved in writing.

(2) The second meeting of the Sangha took place one hundred years later in 277 B.C. at Vaishali. The object of this meeting was to discuss and to come to some decision about the ten matters that had become subjects of controversy.

(3) Thirty-five years later the third meeting of the Sangha was summoned by Emperor Ashoka, in 242 B.C. This meeting was held at Pataliputra and in this meeting the *pitakas* and the rules were modified for the last time.

(4) The fourth meeting of the Sangha was convened in the first century A.D. during the reign of Kanishka and was held in Kashmir. In this particular meeting the Sarvaastivadin sect was the strongest and the dominant group. The third and the fourth meetings of the Buddha Sangha were separated by a long stretch of time because the successors to the throne of Ashoka did not bother with it, without however, in the least affecting the progress of Buddhist religion.

Causes of the Rise of Buddhism

Many factors contributed to the phenomenal rise in the fortunes of Buddhism as a religion, all the more remarkable since it was not accompanied by the sword. It was introduced at a time when

the influence of Brahmanic religion was at a low ebb, since the public had tired of the complicated rituals, hypocritical theorizing and ruthlessness of the behaviour of Brahmins. Another factor which contributed to the well-being of Buddhist religion was that it was initiated by a prince born of Kshatriya parents, an individual of such dominating and magnetic personality that no one could fail to be attracted to him. His method of teaching was also no less appealing and effective, since he used the common vernacular and spiced his teaching with a sprinkling of stories and jokes. This did much to attract the people towards Buddhism. Buddha's lectures were always concerned with a simple and attractive subject that easily caught the imagination and enthusiasm of the people. Another thing which attracted the people was the fact that this religion provided the possibility of an individual achieving liberation or *nirvana* during his lifetime. What was of prime importance was that this required good conduct, irrespective of the caste, colour, social position and creed of the individual who followed this path. This was another fact which won the allegiance of many thousands of Shudras who could not find a place in the Brahmanic order of things and had been compelled to become disciples of Buddha. The king among the Shudras and Kshatriyas converted to Buddhism in large numbers, Ashoka, Kanishka and Bimbasaara being the more famous and prominent among them. Besides, the religion of Buddha created an aura of simplicity which contrasted strongly with the complicated methodology of the Brahmanic religion. Another thing which helped the religion was the formation of the Sangha since the Sangha could be utilized to put before the people an image of corporate life, a life of good conduct and ideals, and this could be more easily imitated by the public at large. Another factor which contributed to the immediate success of Buddhist religion was the fact that it had its origin in a country which was not dominated by Vedic religion. Much of the work in providing impetus to the religion was done by the monks and nuns. Besides, the followers of this religion worked intelligently in calling meetings from time to time which helped to give the impression of the Buddhists being an organised community of dedicated individuals. But probably the chief reason for its success was the tendency of

Buddhism to adapt itself to the changing social pattern, to remain flexible. For this reason it could adapt to social conditions completely different from what it had encountered in India. In spite of the fact that it has today lost its influence in India this religion continues to hold second place among the religions of the world. Besides, it possesses potentialities which can make it a fine contender for the first place among religions in the world of the future.

Downfall of Buddhism in India

After continuous growth and progress covering a period of eleven hundred years, Buddhism lost its vitality and went into a decline. The impelling force was gone, and Huen Tsang, the Chinese traveller who came to India in 630 A.D., noted at the time of his travels that Buddhism was degenerating while Hinduism was prospering. And by the time the Muslims arrived in India Buddhism had been suppressed almost completely, leaving very faint traces of its existence. Many causes contributed to its downfall. Buddhism contrasts with Hindu religion in its refusal to distinguish between Man and God, in fact, it does not believe in the existence of any God. Besides, the followers of Buddhist religion had begun to quarrel soon after the death of Gautama, the conflict being caused by the large sums of money that had collected in the various monasteries and the life of luxury and abandon that the monks and nuns had begun to lead. Besides, kings like Vikramaditya had taken up the cause of Hindu religion. The process of the downfall of Buddhism was further hastened by the philosophical inconsistencies pointed out in Buddhist thinking by such great philosophers as Kumarila Bhatta, Shankara and other Hindu thinkers of note. The effect of this was immediately felt in the large number of people who changed their allegiance and left Buddhism for a return to the religion of Shiva, Krishna, Vishnu and Rama. These people flocked to the temples which they had to precipitately desert some time ago. During the ninth and tenth centuries when the Rajputs were at the helm of affairs, a death blow was dealt to Buddhism because the Rajputs could not tolerate a religion which did not permit them to hunt or to live a life of corporeal pleasures. Hence, it literally vanished from India except for some parts of Orissa, Magadh and South India by the time of the Muslim invasion.

Buddhist Contribution to Indian Culture

In view of the fact that Buddhist religion continued to grow and spread for eleven hundred years in India, it cannot occasion surprise that this religion has left a deep and indelible impression on the social, cultural, political, literary and chiefly the religious aspect of life in India. Its contribution can be summed up under the following heads :

(1) *Influence upon Hindu religion* : Hindu religion has been considerably influenced by Buddhist ethics and religious thinking, although the latter did not in any degree overwhelm Hindu religion. The chief stress in Buddhist thought was on the practice of *ahimsa* or nonviolence and on the necessity of maintaining an attitude of love and sympathy towards all living beings. Later on when the Brahmanic religion stressed the need for nonviolence it was a derivation from Buddhist thought. The Bhagavat school, which is particularly responsible for this humanitarian attitude in Hindu thought, owes much to Buddhist influence.

(2) *Intellectual freedom* : Perhaps the most important contribution of Buddhist thought lies in its direction to the individual to think for himself and in its assertion that independent intellectual activity assists man's development. Brahmanic religion had managed to blunt man's intellectual perceptivity through its excessive rituals and the stress on the repetition of dogma which could be handled only by its priests. A Hindu's function at that time was to follow the Vedic laws faithfully, to do and die, but not to question why. It was Buddhist religion which provided an antidote to this poison, compelled the individual to cogitate on the value of his own thoughts and actions appealed to his reason and aroused in him a respect for its innate simplicity and greatness. Buddhism led the revolt against Vedic religion and all that this stood for. The religious and philosophical notions of the Buddhists are the result of independent and ambitious thinking on the part of Gautama and the more gifted of his disciples. The fact that Buddhist thought is rooted in independent thinking which revolted against the religious and social constrictions of Vedic religion adds to its value both in the field of religion as well as of philosophy.

(3) *Equality and benevolence* : Buddha propagated the notion of equality among all individuals found in society, irrespective of caste, colour, creed, social position and eminence. Every individual could seek sanctuary and received it in the monasteries which welcomed everyone who came there. Differences of age, sex and caste were discarded. Its appeal to the human imagination consists in its rejection of caste differences and the lesson of benevolence which it sought to inculcate. Many were the princes and kings who were influenced by the Buddhist love of benevolence, non-violence, pity, piety and love.

(4) *Greatness of its ethical theory* : Buddha directed his disciples to live in simplicity, following a commonly accepted moral code of social behaviour. His eight-fold path has great ethical implications that make it an invaluable contribution to ethical thought. It lays stress not only on moral laws concerning pity, self renunciation, truthfulness, temperate conduct, but also on love, pity, benevolence, equality, non-violence and forgiveness. This does not imply that before Buddha these qualities had been unknown but simply that they had not been able to make a place for themselves in the general scheme of things in society. The greatness of Buddhist religion consists in its success in propagating these ideas among the common people and in conveying its message from door to door. It was among the first schools of thought which opposed the deterministic trend of Vedic religion by trying to convince the people that man is the architect of his own destiny and that no one, not even God, can interfere in the working out of man's destiny. Buddhism compelled man to a fresh self-examination and self-analysis and to a realization of the importance of the greatness of man's action in the whole that constituted his life. In these terms it is possible to conceive of Buddhism as an independent religion.

(5) *The simplicity, naturalness and intellectual bias of Buddhism* : Buddha advocated the formation of a religion which was not marred by any complex system of ritualistic performances or by any intellectual abstraction that took it far away from normal reality. It was a religion which the average individual could understand without any undue strain to the rather limited resources of the mind.

Above all, it was not a religion confined to an erudite few. Its success in capturing the hearts of simple folk can be explained by its striking naturalness, integrity of sentiment, use of the vernacular, philosophical simplicity and candour, and the use of parables to explain involved religious concepts.

(6) *Contribution to the literature in vernacular* : Buddhism achieved immediate success because its propagators had the intelligence to use the language which was spoken by the people to whom they were trying to communicate their message. This led to an unprecedented growth in the *prakrit* language which prevailed at the time in those regions, all the more so since Buddha himself preached through the medium of this language. Besides, it achieved the very desirable effect of communicating the lesson to every individual since they were delivered practically at every door step.

(7) *Buddhist contribution to art* : Another contribution of Buddhist religion to Indian culture is in the field of architecture and sculpture. Immediately before the advent of Buddhism the Vedic period had been one of static rather than dynamic cultural activity, and it was left to Buddhist religion to inspire the creative arts. Today, there is not a single archeological museum which does not contain some specimen of Buddhist art, for it was during the period of Buddhist religion that painting, sculpture and architecture developed. All over the country there was an outburst of architectural creation which took the form of temples, pillars, cave sculpture and gardens containing statues. In these creations the entire life cycle of Gautama is eternally recreated on stone on which it will continue to exist till eternity. These pieces of art achieve remarkable beauty, expressive of the creativity of the age and of its people. Some of these pieces are reckoned to be among the finest examples of sculpture in the world. The pillar at Sanchi, the Ashoka pillar at Amaravati and the figurines found in Kanheri, Karle and Nasik are among the finest examples. Beauty which is expressed in the paintings and sculpture at Ajanta has caused universal respect for Buddhist art.

(8) *Effect of Buddhism on Indian History* : The influence of Buddhism on Indian history in its political aspects will remain for ever, since it was Buddhism which generated a sense of honor at

bloodshed and war among the princes of India. The teachings of Buddha have had continuous repercussions in the course of subsequent history, apparent more particularly in the case of Ashoka who dramatically renounced the path of bloody conquests and turned to peaceful propagation of his ideals. Thus, it was Buddhism which was responsible for the respect in which Ashoka is held not only in India but also abroad.

(9) *Spread of Indian Culture Abroad* : Buddhist religion helped to spread the elements of Indian culture in foreign countries, wherever Buddhist religion found its feet. Indian culture as reflected in Buddhist thought did much to enrich other cultures, and this was made possible by the flexibility which characterised Buddhist religion because it could adapt to conditions completely dissimilar from the ones it had found in India. This was India's greatest contribution to international development in that period. From third century B.C. to the seventh century after Christ, intellectuals and saints propagated Indian culture through the medium of this religion, and managed to modify other cultures by leaving a deep imprint on them of their own culture. Even today one can find relics of Indian culture in countries in which Buddhist religion continues to be venerated and followed.

Jainism

Circumstances

At a time when India was plunged in spiritual and cultural darkness, two princes were born in Northern India, each destined to perform, in his own way, the work Mohammed had done in Arabia and later on Martin Luther did in Germany. These two princes were Gautama Buddha and Mahavira. Mahavira was the twenty-fourth *teerthankara* of the Jain religion while Gautama was the originator of the Buddhist religion. Nothing definite is known regarding the origin of Jain religion but it is undoubtedly much older than Buddhist religion and its followers can be found spread over the entire country. Jain religion believes in the existence of twenty-four *teerthankaras*. Mahatma Parshvanath was the twenty-third in this list and Lord Mahavira the last. Parshvanath was born some eight centuries before the birth of Christ. He did a lot for the propagation of

Jain religion and his effort was improved upon by his successor who gave new life to this religion by infusing a new spirit into it. His preaching had magical effect upon the public and thus he gained many new followers for his religion. Present day Jains believe that their first *teerthankara*, Rishabha deva, finds mention in the Vedas at numerous places and also that their twenty-second *teerthankara* was a contemporary of the Hindu incarnation, Krishna, and probably also a relation. But in actual fact there is no definite proof regarding the vintage of this religious system, and no literature is available concerning the other twenty-two *teerthankaras* in whom the Jains have such faith. That they were not personages of any particular historical or literary importance is evident, but it is equally obvious that Jainism is older than Buddhism.

Life History of Mahavira

Mahavira was the son of Katak's sister, Katak being the king of Vaishali. Katak's daughter had been married to Bimbisara, and therefore Mahavira was related to the kings of Magadh and Vaishali. He was born in 599 B.C. in a small village named Kund which was near Vaishali, the capital of the defunct royal house of Vajji. Vaishali is located in the Muzzafarpur district of Northern Bihar. Mahavira was born into the family of one Siddhartha who was a Kshatriya chief. He was named Vardhaman during his infancy and he spent his early life comfortably. He was then married to a princess named Yashoda and a daughter named Priyadarshana was born to them. This girl was then married to Jamali, Mahavira's nephew who later on became one of Mahavira's disciples. When Mahavira was 28 his father passed away. Mahavira himself had shown a tendency to meditate right from the beginning of his life, and now after the death of his father he gave up his domestic life with the permission of his elder brother and went into the forest. After twelve years of deep meditation and concentration he received enlightenment, and thereupon he returned to the world to spend the rest of his life in the service of mankind and in religious preaching. This latter part of his life was spent in Magadh and the neighbouring areas. The fact that he belonged to the royal family helped him considerably in his preaching and men tended

to be more amenable to his preaching than they would otherwise be. One reason of his success in capturing the imagination of the public was that, like Buddha, he insisted on talking to the people in their own tongue. He also established a union to which men of every caste could find admittance. In 527 B.C. he finally resigned his physical body at the age of 72 in Pawa, the capital of Malla kingdom. Many were the names by which he was addressed, among them Jin, Kevalin, Mahavira. He was called Jin because he had managed to control and to subdue the sense organs; since he was extremely powerful and endowed with superlative qualities he was also called Mahavira.

History of Jain Religion

The tradition of Jain religion is traced back to the Vedic times on the basis of the evidence of Rishabhadeva and Arishtanemi. At the time of Mahabharata war the group was headed by Neminatha who is considered to be one of the *Teerthankaras*. The twenty-third *terrrthankara*, Parshvanatha, was responsible for organising the Shramana sect of Jain religion. He was opposed to the Shraman vedic ritual. During the time of Mahavira and Buddha some of these Shramanas embraced Jainism and some turned Buddhist.

Mahavira was the last *teerthankara* of Jain religion, and he managed to put the religion on very strong footing before his death. He was among the first to put the principle of non-violence on a firm footing. One consequence of this was that his sect remained organised and well-knit even after he had passed away.

At the time of Alexander's invasion of India some Jain monks were settled along the banks of the river Indus. Whether Chandragupta Maurya accepted the Jain religion or not cannot be determined with any degree of certainty but Ashoka's writings prove that Jain religion was fairly popular at the time. At about this time the Jain monks living in monasteries split into two groups over the question of whether the small statues of the *teerthankars* should be clothed before being exhibited or they should be exhibited in the nude. This also raised the allied problem whether the monks and saints should dress or avoid clothes. This difference of opinion

widened the rift between the two groups to such an extent that by the first century after Christ two distinct groups had been formed, the *digambaras* and the *shvetambaras*. The former remained naked while the latter wore white clothes, as is evident by their respective titles.

In the Maurya period one group of Shramans went to South under the leadership of Bhadrabahu while another group remained in Mysore to propagate their religion. Kharvel, the king of Kalinga during the first century, accepted Jain religion. In the earlier centuries after Christ, Mathura in the north and Mysore in the South were important centres of Jain religion. Between the fifth and the twelfth century, the Jain religion found its supporters among the kings of the Gang, Kadamb, Chalukya and Rashtrakuta dynasties of the South. Many Jain poets also lived at the court of these kings. King Sidhraj and his son Kumarpal, both belonging to the Chalukya dynasty, adopted Jainism as the religion of their state and helped to spread it extensively in Gujarat. Hemchand, a Jain scholar, lived at the court of Kumarpal. At one time even the Rajputs contributed their mite to spreading this religion. Since the Jains were quite peaceable they escaped much of the pain and suffering inflicted by the Muslims on the followers of other religions. This gain was not merely negative, for Akbar not only saved them from suffering but helped the religious sect in a more positive manner. But slowly the Jain monasteries fell on evil days and disintegrated so that by the end of the Moghul reign over India they had completely lost their influence. At the present time the followers of Jain religion do not number more than fourteen lakhs and the majority of them are traders.

Digambar and Shevtambar Sects

According to the Jain texts and mythology, two hundred years after the death of Mahavira, the kingdom of Magadh faced famine during the reign of Chandragupta Maurya. The famous Jain monk Badhrabahu departed from Magadh along with some of his followers on account of the famine and settled in Karnatak. In his absence the Jains of Magadh studied and edited their religion. After the famine came to an end the Jains who had deserted Magadh returned but

during the time that had passed the life of the Jains of Magadh had undergone much change, noticeably in respect of dress as these people had taken to white dress. But the Jains of Karnatak had continued to live according to the old traditions of living in the nude. For this reason the Jains belonging to the two areas came to be called *shevtambar* and *digambar* respectively. One outcome of this controversy was that the religious texts authenticated by the *shevtambers* were not accepted as authentic by the *digambers*. One evidence of this disagreement lies in the fact that the latter do not accept many parts of the religious texts as authentic. These two sects had been separated somewhere between 79 and 82 A.D. In the fourth century before Christ a meeting of the Jains was held to give a scholarly rendering of the Jain texts, but these works got their final form only in 445 A.D. at Ballabhi. Jain religion has forty eight religious texts, though they are accepted as authentic only by the *shevtambar* group. There is no difference or disagreement on principle between the two sects since their differences are limited to the sphere of moral thinking and religious behaviour.

Contribution of Jain Religion to Indian Culture, Folk Literature and Folk Languages

In spite of the fact that it is a small group, Jain religion has made important contributions to the development of a folk literature and language. Brahmanic literature was in Sanskrit while that of the Buddhists was in Pali but it was Jain religion which turned to the local vernacular in every part of the country to which they spread out and in which they wanted to propagate their religion. A sizeable part of their literature is written in Pali. In this way, Jain religion helped in the development and growth of Prakrit language, and more than that, it was the first to encourage many of the folk languages to turn literary. Mahavira himself delivered his sermons in Ardhamagadhi in order to make them comprehensible to those who understood Magadhi or Sauraseni dialects. His sermons which have been compiled into a single book called *Shrutanga*, which contains twelve chapters, are in Ardhamagadhi. Recently, a considerable store of Jain literature was discovered, written in a language which is the predecessor of such modern Indian languages as Hindi, Gujarati

and Marathi. This literature is written in Apbhransha. This language is a kind of link between the vedic languages such as Sanskrit on the one hand, and the modern Indian languages that are spoken in various parts of India, on the other. For this reason this language is of great importance for the linguist and his discipline. It is possible that the literature of the South may hold a key to the motivating force behind Jain thought. Even the ancient literature of Kannada is not unaffected by Jainism. The Jains have even written some of their religious texts in Sanskrit, and it would be no exaggeration to state that they have created a great philosophical and creative literature in that language. Jains have even exercised their mind on such technical topics as Mathematics, Grammar, Philology, etc.

Development of Architecture

Jain religion was at its highest point of achievement and influence during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Like the Buddhists the Jains also built *stupas* to honour their saints. The *stupas* found in Mathura are the oldest of this kind of architecture. One can find figurines of the eleventh and twelfth centuries in Bundelkhand. At Bejola and Karkal, two places in Mysore, one can see large statues of Gomteshwar. Examples of Jain sculpture can be found in the rocks around Gwalior, dating back to the fifteenth century. Jains had also built temples by hollowing out caves during the second century. Examples of this can be found in the Hathi Gumphā cave in Orissa. Jain temples are to be found in Parshavanath in Kathiawar. Statues that are found in these temples represent Jain art at its best. The Jain temple at Mount Abu in Rajasthan is a living example of the intellectuality and aesthetic sense of the followers of this religion.

Buddhist religion has practically vanished from this country but Jain religion continues to exist even to the present day, a fact which can be explained in the light of two facts — the first, that majority of the Jains belong to the trading class, the second that with the passage of time the gulf between Jain religion and Brahmanical religion tended to reduce. Another direct cause of the survival of Jain religion is its explicit faith in non-violence and peace. It is

this principle which is primarily responsible for the happy position in which Jain religion is to be found. Yet, in spite of all this achievement, Jain religion could not extend the sphere of its influence beyond certain well defined limits. Even within the bounds of the country it did not spread very far. It failed to achieve wide popularity on account of the following reasons : inflexibility of dogmas, steady progress and growth of Brahmanical religion, lack of intellectual independence to some extent, failure to enlist the aid of enthusiastic religious preachers, having to function without the protection and moral support of any major king, theoretical objection to caste discrimination but prejudicial behaviour towards individuals of the higher castes

Distinction between Buddhism and Jainism

Jainism and Buddhism differ in the following respects :

(1) *Different opinions about creation* : Buddhist religion holds that there is no permanent and indestructible element at the root of creation and that the entire universe is temporary and capable of destruction. On the other hand, Jainism conceives the universe as composed of two elements, the *jiva* and the *ajiva*, of which the first is living and indestructible.

(2) *Difference regarding means of attaining salvation* : The Jains and the Buddhists also differ in their opinions regarding the method by which salvation can be achieved. Jain religion is in favour of meditation while Buddhist thought is opposed to inflicting any severe penalty upon the body. Buddha advocated the adoption of a middle path between the extremes of complete sensual enjoyment on the one hand and of self infliction of pain on the other. Buddhist religion believes that penance and asceticism of any kind are without value, but Jain religion attaches much importance to some of them

(3) *Difference regarding the principle of non-violence* : The Jain conception of non-violence is more comprehensive than the Buddhist theory since Buddhist religion permits the eating of meat under certain circumstances in spite of its taboo on killing of living organisms. On the other hand the Jains have elaborated non-violence into a fad, for some of them put a light bandage around the nose in order

to prevent any insect being killed by man's inhalation and exhalation. These people drink only distilled water, eat their food before the setting of the sun and take elaborate precautions to avoid killing insects even during the sweeping of the floor. Such dogmatic approach is typical of Jain religion, and it constitutes one of the important reasons why it failed to find many adherents. On the other hand, Buddhist religion found a following even in countries where meat is part of the regular diet, in spite of its principle of non-killing.

(4) *Differences in the conception of liberation* : According to Buddhist religion salvation means the complete extinction of personality. On the other hand, the Jain religion holds that liberation consists in the destruction of pain and the liberation of the soul from the cycle of birth and death. In Buddhist religion it is believed that one can attain liberation even before death but the Jains believe that true liberation can be had only after death.

(5) *Different spheres of influence* : Jainism did not extend beyond the frontiers of India where it continues to exist even today. Buddhism, on the other hand, spread in many parts of the world and even today boasts a following of fifty crores or more but it has practically vanished from India. Followers of the Jain religion in India do not number more than two million. It is evident that Buddhist religion was propagated far more than Jainism, in spite of the fact that Jainism survived in India due to its compatibility with Hindu religion. It was this compatibility that Buddhism lacked, and it paid the price.

(6) *Differences in the extent of royal patronage* : Both Mahavira and Buddha, during their own life time, managed to win royal patronage. But this royal patronage to Buddhist religion continued even after the death of Buddha, at the hands of Ashoka, Kanishka and Harsha, and helped to spread it among a large number of people. On the other hand, once Mahavira passed away from the scene, Jainism lost its standing with the royal houses and therefore lost an important element in its propaganda.

In conclusion it should be pointed out that both Jainism and Buddhism developed in India from religious revolutions. Both religions were opposed to social and religious evils like ritualism, dogmatic assertion, extension of prerogatives and feelings of un-

touchability. Both religions were concerned with the attempt to replace these blemishes by equality, simplicity and truth, and hence both religions occupy important places in the cultural history of the nation.

Chapter VIII

MODERN RENAISSANCE AND REFORM MOVEMENTS

Historical Background

After the British empire had been established in India it appeared that they had got a firm foothold in the country. The British analysed the social life of the Indians as it then existed and came to the obvious conclusion that the Hindus were lagging behind all others in the religious, social, political and economic fields. This encouraged them in the attempt to impose their own culture and civilization upon the local population, believing that under the circumstances the people of India would be more receptive than otherwise. By this time, most of the social malpractices that had been introduced in Indian society from time to time, such hideous rituals as the hypocrisy of pundits, child marriage, performance of sati, bigamy, caste discrimination, purdah, had all matured and come to their full growth. It was in this milieu that the Christian missionaries started preaching their own religion through the medium of Hindi, a task which was supplemented by the government, which tried to convert Indians to a western culture through the use of English language. That the British succeeded in their design is evident from the rapidity with which the local population accepted this foreign culture and language. One immediate effect of this religious brainwashing was that the more rigid and fanatic Hindus exerted their energies to oppose any reform in their own religion while another section of Hindus immediately took to the English

culture and were heart and soul in favour of adopting it without delay. The latter group of people was attracted primarily by the scientific developments taking place in the West. At the same time another group of people separated itself from either of the two fanatic and extremist thinkers and advocated a synthesis between Indian culture and the new British culture, particularly the latter's work in the field of science. This particular group of thinkers opposed any kind of dogmatic inflexibility where religion is concerned, but they also objected to being made slaves of science. It was their declared aim to find some kind of synthesis between the two. And most of the movements for social or religious reform that occurred in the nineteenth century were the result of the energetic working of this group.

Intellectual Awakening

Renaissance is essentially an intellectual awakening. The most important sign of an intellectual awakening is criticism, a critical analysis and questioning of all the dogmas held hitherto in different fields of knowledge such as metaphysical, social, economic and political, etc. The Renaissance thinkers questioned all old concepts and principles in this field. This was partly due to the intellectual influence of the West exerted through Western education. It is noteworthy that most of the Renaissance thinkers were educated in the West. This gave them an opportunity to compare their own thought and social institutions with the thought and social institutions of the West. As a result of this comparison they could on the one hand realise their low status and on the other hand understand its reasons. Therefore, naturally, they felt an urgent need of social reform. Examples of this class of thinkers can be found in Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Keshab Chandra Sen, Vivekananda and Ramkrishna among others. These were undoubtedly the first people to question the medieval thinking and practices in India.

Revivalism

In spite of an intellectual scrutiny and questioning of the ideas

prevalent in different fields of Indian life, the Renaissance thinkers were basically revivalist. This revivalism goes back to the age of Vedas and the Upanishads. Almost all these thinkers read Vedas and Upanishads and were impressed by their spirit. They found their teachings even more profound than the ideas prevalent in the West. They felt that India need not imitate the West in any field of life, it should rather go back to its own ancient treasures of thought in philosophy, social thought and political thinking. They realised that the ancient Indian social and political institutions could be the sound basis for a future awakened India. This revivalism can be found in almost all the social reform movements of the Renaissance period including Brahmo Samaj, Arya Samaj, Prarthana Samaj, Ram Krishna Mission and Theosophical Society. The philosophical basis of all these reform movements was supplied by the Vedas, the Upanishads, and the Bhagwadgita. Their religious thinking and cosmopolitanism and a synthetic approach to religion was a direct result of the monism and monotheism taught by the Upanishads. Their emphasis on social service and their humanism was a derivative from the Bhagwadgita. This is true not only about Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Swami Dayananda, Keshab Chandra Sen, Ramkrishna and Vivekananda, but also about our contemporary Indian social philosophers including Sri Aurobindo, Rabindranath Tagore, M. K. Gandhi and others. Thus the contemporary Indian social philosophy is not so much impressed by the Western thought as it is influenced by the ancient Indian philosophy. In fact it is a home-coming in philosophy after a degeneration and a downward curve in the medieval ages. It is the revival of the spirit of Swadeshi. This birth of nationalism is not only characteristic of nineteenth century India but the whole of Asia. It could be seen in almost all the Asian and African countries. This awakening was very much influenced by the intellectual awakening in Europe but everywhere it was embedded in the indigenous soil.

Causative Socio-Political Factors

The factors responsible for reform movement and the new awakening and reconstruction of Indian social thought were intellectual as

well as social and political. Social thought, while on the one hand bound with the philosophical traditions of the country, is very much influenced by the contemporary socio-political circumstances. In fact social thought must change with the time. This change does not eliminate continuity. Both continuity and change are equally signs of wisdom. This is particularly in the case of social thought which does not search after eternal truth but attempts to give an integral vision about the social ideal, partly in continuity with the ancient tradition and partly as a result of contemporary circumstances. Indian thinkers were very much encouraged by the remarks of the western Indologists about the worth of Indian philosophical treatises. As the English translations of the Indian works were available in the West, and as great men like Vivekananda introduced Indian thought to the West, a great number of Western thinkers became interested in the study of Indian philosophy. To their amazement they found that the Indian thought was no less in depth and width than any thought propounded in the West and they expressed this amazement in so many words. This encouraged the intelligentsia in India to read the ancient scriptures and find out solutions of socio-political problems in them. Not only Ram Mohan and Vivekananda sought the answers to social and political problems in Gita and Upanishads, but Tagore and Gandhi were equally inspired by them. Besides the intellectual awakening and the urge for revival among Indian intelligentsia the following socio-political factors were responsible for reform movement in Indian society.

1. *Western Education* : Almost all the important Renaissance thinkers including Bhandarkar, Ranade, Chiploonkar, Tilak, Agarkar, Gokhale, to name only a few, had high academic degrees in Western education. Though Macaulay aimed at creating a class of civil servants by introducing English education in India, the same education created revolutionary thinkers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Keshab Chandra Sen, Mahadev Govind Ranade and Vivekananda. The most important characteristics of western education were : intellectual bias, rationalism, individualism, critical attitude to scriptures, synthetic approach to religion, secularism, cosmopolitanism and humanism. All these characteristics were imbibed by the intelligentsia through the growth of Western education in India. Thus the spread

of education by the Britishers in India was undoubtedly the most important social factor responsible for the new awakening and reconstruction of Indian thought.

2. *Establishment of New Associations and Societies* : Western education and a more intimate contact with the Western society led to an intense urge for social and political reforms in India. This led to the establishment of dozens of associations and societies. Jotirao Phule established Satya Shodhak Samaj — with the purpose of reform in Maharashtra. Prarthana Samaj was another important institution of social reforms in Maharashtra. In Bengal Brahmo Samaj was established by Raja Ram Mohan Roy mainly for intellectual awakening but also for social and political reform. Another important association was Ramkrishna Mission founded by Vivekananda in the name of his master Ramkrishna. Swami Dayananda established Arya Samaj which rapidly spread throughout the northern India and carried out reforms in almost all the directions. Besides, Theosophical Society established by Annie Besant was an important society for religious reforms in India. All these new associations and societies encouraged new thinking and reconstruction of social institutions on the pattern of ancient Indian examples.

3. *Indian Approach to the Economic Problems* : An important part of the revivalist tendency of the Renaissance period was an Indian approach to the economic problems. Eminent economic thinkers pointed out that India cannot solve its economic problems by an uncritical application of the doctrines of Smith, Ricardo and Mill. They, on the other hand, pointed out that solutions can be found in the procedures adopted by ancient Indian village republics. M. G. Ranade, in his essays on Indian economics, pleaded for an Indian approach to economic problems. This emphasis is the background of the economic programmes of reconstruction found in the thought of Rabindranath Tagore and M. K. Gandhi in 20th Century.

4. *Rise of nationalism* : The Renaissance period witnessed a rise of nationalism in almost all the slave countries of the world including India. Illustrious poets and thinkers wrote works expressing intense sentiments of patriotism. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee founded the *Banga-Darshan* in 1872 and published his famous patriotic novel

Anandmath. This novel was highly acclaimed by Sri Aurobindo who was another great patriotic writer that India produced. Swami Dayananda also strongly advocated nationalism in most of his writings. The most important leader of the rise of nationalism in India, however, was B. G. Tilak, who through his two famous weeklies, *The Kesari* and *The Mahratta* took a leading part in spreading patriotic sentiments in the country. Vishnushastri Chiploonkar was another great patriotic writer of Maharashtra. Other poets and writers praised national heroes in their writings and aroused national sentiments in the nation. Ram Das and Shivaji, Maharana Pratap and Guru Govind Singh were praised by these poets and writers. All this created a wave of nationalism and patriotism, very much explicit in the writings of contemporary Indian social philosophers including Sri Aurobindo, Vivekananda, Tagore and Gandhi.

5. *The Growth of Hindi Literature* : An important social factor in the new awakening and reconstruction of Indian thought was the growth of Hindi language and literature. This is so since the rise of a nation is very much dependent on the growth of a national language. Hindi was propagated as the national language of India and as a popular vehicle for the communication of national and patriotic sentiments. Among the noteworthy writings of this period were *Prem-sagar* of Lallulal, *Nasiketopakhyaana* of Sadal Misra and *Bharat Durdasha* of Bharatendu Harishchandra. Swami Dayananda Saraswati wrote his famous *Satyartha Prakash* in Hindi. Most of the prose and poetry works of this period expressed patriotic and nationalistic sentiments.

6. *Establishment of Western Political Institutions* : The most important political factor responsible for new awakening and reconstruction of Indian thought was the introduction in India of Western political institutions such as executive council, the law member, the law commission and the supreme court etc. These political institutions aroused nationalism in Indian political thought and Indian nationalists started demanding more and more political lift and equality before law. There was a growing demand for the introduction of British type representative political bodies in the country by Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Dadabhai Naoroji, Surendranath Banerji, Gopal Krishna Gokhale and other Indian political leaders.

7. *Establishment of Indian National Congress* : The most momentous event in the history of Indian nationalism was the establishment of Indian National Congress by A.O. Hume in 1885. Though Hume established Congress with the purpose of creating a class of thinkers who could advise the British to introduce necessary reforms in India, gradually Indian National Congress became a platform for the demand of complete freedom from the British rule. The most important contribution in this direction was given by B. G. Tilak, Lala Lajpatrai and Bipin Chandra Pal. After the extremists were separated from the main organisation they carried on their activities separately. In 1920 the same Indian National Congress which was a beginning of political activity in Renaissance period became the herald of Indian Nationalism under the leadership of M. K. Gandhi who demanded *Purna Swarajya*. Along with presenting political demands before the Britishers, leaders of Indian National Congress were active in social and political reform activities. Each one of them intensely thought over the social and political problems of the country and tried to find out solutions on the basis of suggestions from the West and inspirations from the ancient Indian literature.

8. *Rise of New Economic Class* : No country can progress in thought or in practice without the indigenous economic support. The British rule in India gradually encouraged Indian people to carry on trade and commerce on capitalistic basis. This led to the rise of a new economic class which gradually became the economic base of social and nationalistic movements. It was this class which contributed generously to the funds of Brahmo Samaj, the Arya Samaj and the Indian National Congress. It can be said without exaggeration that without the economic support of this class modern Renaissance could not get a momentum in the country.

9. *Western Political Literature* : Besides the introduction of Western political institutions, the Britishers introduced western political literature in India. While some of the literature was imported from the West such as the works of Karl Marx, Lenin, Mussolini, Hitler, Spencer, Mill, Tolstoy and Ruskin etc., literature was produced by Indian writers also introducing the life and works of the leaders of Western society to the Indian people. The important among these writers were Surendranath Banerji, Lala Lajpatrai and V. D. Savarkar. Among the later writers were Iqbal and Sri

Aurobindo and the celebrated Nobel prize winner Rabindranath Tagore.

10. *Social legislations* : All the above factors led to an increase in intellectual awakening and a demand for social legislation in different fields. Almost all the Renaissance thinkers were pained at the condition of women and low-caste people in India. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Keshab Chandra Sen, Swami Dayananda Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, M. G. Ranade and Telang demanded social legislation in every field of social life. They demanded the abolition of Sati custom, the emancipation of women and elimination of all the drawbacks of the down-trodden elements in the society. Before this demand the Britishers were almost cool to social reform in India. But the demands raised by these eminent leaders gradually resulted in social legislation in different fields leading to social and political emancipation of the backward classes.

The above socio-political factors created a new awakening in the country. This awakening resulted in several social and political reform movements. Of these the most representative movements of the period were : Adi Brahmo Samaj of Ram Mohan Roy, Brahmo Samaj of Keshab Chandra Sen, Ramkrishna Mission of Vivekananda, Theosophical Society of Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott and last though not the least the Arya Samaj of Swami Dayananda.

Adi Brahmo Samaj of Ram Mohan Roy

The first chief religious reformer of the nineteenth century was Raja Ram Mohan Roy, whose efforts in his chosen field left a deep impression upon contemporary social, political and religious thinking. Ram Mohan Roy was born in a small village named Radhanagar in Bengal in the year 1772. He belonged to a family of Brahmins. He was a linguist who had mastered Sanskrit, English, Hindi, Persian, Hebrew, Greek and Latin. He made use of his knowledge to study the religious books in each of these languages and thereby he became quite knowledgeable on the subject of religion. He realized that if Hindu religion was to retain its life and strength it must undergo some modification, and it was with this end in view that the Brahmo Samaj was established in 1822. The principles

of this society avoided all rigidity, stressing the importance of universal brotherhood and equality and the existence of a single God. In the social sphere Ram Mohan Roy opposed all iniquity, child marriage, sati, bigamy, caste discrimination and the rest of the problems that beset Hindu society. In the field of religion he could not and did not support the practice of priestly hypocrisy, worship of stone idols, the elaborate rituals, human and other sacrifices made as part of yagya, etc. He pointed out the need for widow remarriage and the education of women. He did not oppose the western style of education since he was aware that the gulf of scientific learning that existed in Indian society could be filled only by this form of education. He exerted himself for the improvement and advancement of Indian literature and culture. He wanted the people to restrict themselves to constitutional methods in fighting for their freedom. Brahmo Samaj achieved wide popularity among the Bengalis, and after Ram Mohan Roy it was further propagated by such great figures as Devendranath Tagore and Keshab Chandra Sen. After some time the Samaj broke up into two groups on account of differences on basic principles, resulting in the formation of the Adi Brahmo Samaj led by D. N. Tagore and the Brahmo Samaj headed by Keshab Chandra Sen. Later on the latter became prominent and progressive when such eminent persons as Jagdish Chandra Bose, Bipin Chandra Pal, C. R. Das and Aurobindo Ghosh joined it.

Teaching of Brahmo Samaj : The main teachings of the Brahmo Samaj can be summed up as enunciated by Devendranath Tagore as follows :

1. In the beginning there was naught. The one Supreme alone existed. He created the whole universe.
2. He alone is the God of Truth, Infinite Wisdom, Goodness and Power, Eternal and Allpervading, the One without a second (*Ekamevadvitiam*).
3. In His worship lies our salvation in this world and in the next.
4. Loving Him and doing that which He loveth constitute His Worship.

The social thought of Brahmo Samaj can be summed up in the following words of Devendranath, "He who desireth the good of mankind must look on others as he looks on himself. It behoves thee to love thy neighbour, since it pleases thee to be loved by him; and to avoid giving pain by hatred, since it causes thee pain to be hated by another. Thus in all things shalt thou deal with others by comparing them with thyself; for as pleasure and pain affect thee, so do they affect all creatures. Such conduct alone is the means of attaining well-being. He who adores God and loves man, is a saint. Such a man never rejoices in finding fault with men, for man is beloved of him. He is pained by the sight of a fault in others, and lovingly does he labour for its correction. He loves man as man; and owing to that love, is pleased by the sight of good, and grieved by the sight of evil in man. Therefore, he is unable to proclaim the faults of others with rejoicing. The satisfaction of the inner spirit, or, in other words, a good conscience, is the unfailing fruit of the practice of righteousness. In this approval of conscience is felt the approval of God. If the inner spirit is satisfied, all sufferings cease. Without the practice of righteousness, the inner spirit is never satisfied. The mind may find enjoyment in the pleasures of the world, but if the conscience is diseased, then even the height of worldly bliss becomes valueless. Therefore, by the practice of righteousness, ye shall preserve a clear conscience, and ye shall abandon all things whereby the satisfaction of the spirit may be marred." ²

The Renaissance thinkers advocated a synthetic approach to religion which was followed by contemporary Indian social thinkers. This tendency was most eloquent in the sayings of Ramkrishna. It was circulated by his able disciple Vivekananda. The same tendency was again expressed in M. K. Gandhi's evening prayer where he used to recite Quran and Bible along with Gita. Among the Renaissance thinkers Ram Mohan Roy was almost the first to start this synthetic approach to religion. He was equally impressed by Bible, Quran, Upanishads and Gita. He believed in monotheism and monism though he failed to distinguish between the two. He was bitterly against sectarianism, superstition and idolatry but he did not repudiate Vedic religion. Like Spinoza he accepted substance

as the ultimate reality, but unlike him he considered attributes as much necessary as the substance. Here he was more impressed by Ramanuj and Vaishnav Saints.

Social and Political Ideas

Ram Mohan Roy is known not only by Brahmo Samaj but more by his untiring efforts for social and political reform in India. Therefore, social and political ideas are even more important than metaphysical concepts in his social philosophy. The following are the important principles he enunciated :

1. *Personal and Political Freedom* : An important characteristic of Renaissance thinkers and then of contemporary philosophers, was emphasis on personal and political freedom started by Ram Mohan Roy. Pointing out his insistence in this direction Bipin Chandra Pal wrote, "...the Raja was the first to deliver the message of political freedom to India. He so keenly felt the loss of this freedom by his people, that even as a boy yet within his teens he left his country and travelled to Tibet, because he found it difficult to tolerate the domination of his country by another nation, though subsequently, with close acquaintance with the culture and character of the British people, who seemed to him to have been 'more intelligent, more steady and moderate in their conduct', the Raja became 'inclined in their favour, feeling persuaded that their rule, though a foreign yoke, would lead more speedily and surely to the amelioration of the native inhabitants'. But he never believed or found it possible to tolerate the idea that India's unending subjection to the British rule was at all necessary for the amelioration of the Indian people." ³

In spite of his insistence for political freedom Ram Mohan Roy recognised British rule as a blessing to India. This tendency starting from Roy and followed by Keshab Chandra Sen and others can be seen right upto M. K. Gandhi who declared that our struggle is against the foreign rule and not against the British people. Hailing the British rule in India Ram Mohan Roy wrote, "Among other objects, in our solemn devotion, we frequently offer up our humble thanks to God, for the Blessings of British rule in India and sincerely

pray, that it may continue in its beneficent operation for centuries to come."4

2. *Freedom of the Press* : Alongwith Dwarkanath Tagore, Har-chandra Ghosh, Gauri Charan Banerjee, Prasanna Kumar Tagore and Chandra Kumar Tagore, Ram Mohan Roy drafted a petition for freedom of the press in India and addressed it to the Supreme Court. When the petition was rejected an appeal was made to the King in Council. Ram Mohan Roy made a fervent appeal which proved his immense love for freedom of the press.

3. *Reform of Judiciary* : Summing up Raja's insistence on judicial and administrative reforms in India J. C. Ghosh wrote, "At the request of the Board of Control he submitted in writing his famous evidence to the Select Committee of the Commons, upon the working of the Judicial and Revenue system of India, and the general character and condition of its native inhabitants, and upon various important matters connected with India. He published it in a pamphlet form with the title, 'An Exposition of the Revenue and Judicial Systems of India.' It embraces some of the most important questions relating to the administration of India, such as the reform of courts, the jurisdiction of the Courts of the country over Europeans, the jury system, the separation of the executive and judicial offices, the confiscation laws, the consulting of the people in legislation, the establishment of a native militia, the larger employment of natives, the age and education of civil servants, the amelioration of the condition of the ryots and the making of laws for their protection, and the permanent settlement."5

4. *Humanism and universal religion* : Another important characteristic of the Renaissance thinkers followed by contemporary Indian social philosophers was stated by Ram Mohan Roy in his emphasis on humanism and universal religion. He was a great champion of human rights and believed in co-operation, toleration and fellowship. He was a cosmopolitan and stood for liberty and fraternity. His study in the field of religion was deep and wide which convinced him that God is one though different religions worship Him in different forms. Thus he carried the spiritual tradition of Kabir, Nanak, Dadu and Tukaram to social and political fields. This tendency started from Roy and continued upto M. K. Gandhi.

5. *Welcome to English Education* : Indian leaders, however they may have struggled against the British, generally always praised the English education in India. Roy among others considered it to be a boon for India. He wrote, "If it had been intended to keep the British nation in ignorance of real knowledge, the Baconian philosophy would not have been allowed to displace the system of the schoolmen which was the best calculated to perpetuate ignorance. In the same manner the Sanskrit system of education would be the best calculated to keep this country in darkness if such had been the policy of the British legislature. But as the improvement of the native population is the object of the Government, it will consequently promote a more liberal and enlightened system of instruction, embracing Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, Anatomy, with other useful sciences."⁶

6. *Cultural Synthesis* : Like other Renaissance thinkers after him and later on like the contemporary Indian social philosophers Roy wanted a cultural synthesis of East and West. He was so much impressed by the Western knowledge and Christian religion that he adopted many activities which were rebuked in Orthodox circles. He was a feminist and championed the rights of women. Throughout his life he fought like a hero against the exploitation of backward classes. Thus it can be said that Roy was the pioneer of almost all the important tendencies witnessed in the social philosophy of Renaissance and of contemporary time.

Keshab Chandra Sen and his Brahmo Samaj

Keshab Chandra Sen, though inspired by Ram Mohan Roy differed in some of his views and therefore founded the Brahmo Samaj of India on November 11, 1866, separate from the Adi Brahmo Samaj. Like Roy he had wide reading in religion and was impressed by Bible, the Zend Avesta and the Quran along with the Upanishads and the Bhagwadgita. Thus we find an eclectic and synthetic approach in the philosophy and religion of Keshab Chandra Sen. He considered God as a creative force and used the word God-force. According to him the design and harmony witnessed in Nature is a sufficient proof for the reality of the creator of the

Universe. Thus man's primary duty is to obey the divine will.

In the social field Keshab Chandra Sen advocated five types of activities — Female uplift, growth of education, circulation of cheap literature, observation of temperance and finally charity. He was deeply devotional and was very much impressed by Vaishnav mysticism. And yet he was a great reformer and social thinker. Like Roy he advocated political freedom and, again like Roy he thought of British rule in India as a blessing. He even went forward to point out that British rule was a divine boon to the country. He said, "Nevertheless the contact of England with India was providential and not a mere accident. If we look beneath the surface we cannot fail to see the wise and beneficent arrangements of Divine economy. I do most devoutly believe that it was for the definite purpose of helping this country that the English were commissioned and deputed to come and rule here; that divine purpose has been consistently carried out in spite of human errors and immoralities which were apparent in the matter. As soon as the spirit of the English mind came in contact with the Indian mind, a grand revolution commenced. Native society was shaken to its centre; all departments of Indian life were convulsed as if by some mysterious agency; and a series of most important reforms, political, intellectual, social and religious, came in rapid succession." 7

Keshab Chandra Sen called great men as the spokesmen of their age. Like Gita he believed that God sends his emissaries in the form of great men to uproot evil from the world. These great men are marked by the characteristics of absence of selfishness, originality of wisdom, sincerity and heroic power. Explaining the value of great men in the history of a country Keshab said, "They (the great men) mark the transition state of society, the turning point in the career of nations. The preceding age ends and a new epoch commences in them. In the established economy of Providence they are special dispensations to meet the pressing wants of humanity. Hence their appearance is not a mere accident, a casual phenomenon, but the sequence of a regular and constant law which regulates the normal interests of mankind. Their birth is always the result of a deep and irrepressible moral necessity. Where-

ever and whenever peculiar circumstances demand a great man, the very pressure of that demand drags him forth per force. In God's moral government, to feel a want is to get the thing needed." ⁸

Like Ram Mohan Roy, Keshabchandra Sen was the champion of liberty, liberty of individual and liberty of nations. He interpreted the concept of liberty in a very wide sense including social, political, religious and every other form of liberty. He has explained in detail his concept of liberty in his lecture entitled "The Future Church". He pleaded for the emancipation of backward nations in his famous speech entitled "Asia's Message to Europe." In this message he said, "Among the advanced nations of the west the tendency of modern politics is not to exclude any, but to include all; not to destroy any section, but to represent the whole people. The highest form of government is synonymous with the most thorough-going and comprehensive representation. You are ever extending the franchise. You take in thousands today, tens of thousands tomorrow, and millions the next day, till you include the very humblest and the lowest of the population, and give the dumb and the downtrodden voice in Parliament. If you care for real political prosperity, surely you cannot reject the humbler classes; you cannot extinguish them because of their poverty, you cannot crush them into atoms because of their ignorance. There is everywhere a cry for justice, justice to the weak and powerless, justice to the working classes. Not to listen to that cry would be a disaster." ⁹

Keshabchandra Sen like Ram Mohan Roy was a cosmopolitan and a humanist. He was against all sectarianism, mutual hatred and exclusiveness. He believed in harmony as the ideal for individual and society. He wanted to limit the powers of the State though he defined it as "the perfection of consolidated fellowship." ¹⁰ According to him the true spirit of religion required the cementing of the bond of international fellowship. His was a catholic, comprehensive and synthetic approach. Explaining his synthetic approach to religion he maintained that every religion is true and renders a service to humanity. Thus he believed in world fellowship though he was an ardent nationalist.

Annie Besant and Theosophical Society

Among the representative movements of Renaissance period Theosophical Society occupied an important place. It is so since it re-oriented ancient Indian philosophy of the Upanishads and the Bhagwadgita in modern language. Theosophical Society was established by Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott. Annie Besant became the president of this society in 1907. Under her presidentship, theosophical society became a real force not only in the field of philosophy and religion but also in the fields of social and political reforms in India. Annie Besant was so much influenced by Hinduism that she believed that she was a Hindu in past life. She came to India in 1893 at the age of forty six and devoted herself to social, religious, educational and some times political activities. Her political views were not very mature but she did make a mark in the field of religion and social thought. Her philosophical views were almost the same as found in Hinduism. She was particularly fascinated by Hindu pantheism and considered Advaita Vedanta as the intellectual view between Hinduism and Islam. Her views in the field of religion were similar to those of Ramkrishna, Vivekananda and Dayanand. She believed in all the dictums of Hinduism. She was very much impressed by the Bhagwadgita and wrote a famous commentary on it. Annie Besant believed that so far five main races and their sub-divisions have evolved in the world. She thought that in future two more root races will evolve thus bringing the total to seven. She considered Aryan race as the best and thought central Asia as its place of origin. The following are the important socio-political ideas of Annie Besant :

1. *Liberty* : Like Roy and Keshab Sen, Annie Besant demanded home-rule for India. She wrote, "I demand for everyman, whatever be his opinions, that he shall be able to speak out with honest frankness the result of honest thought without forfeiting his rights as citizen, without destroying his social position, and without troubling his domestic peace.... Liberty is immortal and eternal and her triumph is sure, however it may be delayed... and hers is also

the triumph of tomorrow if only we who adore her, if only we can (be) true to ourselves and each other. But they who love her must work for her, as well as worship her, for labour is the only prayer to Liberty, and devotion the only praise." ¹¹ Explaining her idea of liberty and the free men and women in a free nation she said, "You can only have a free nation when you have free men to build it out of free men and women both; but no man is free and no woman is free who is under the dominance of appetite, or vice, or drunkenness, or any form of evil which he is unable to control. Self control is the foundation on which alone freedom can be built, without that you have anarchy, not freedom, and every increase of the present anarchy is paid for by the price of happiness, which is given in exchange." ¹²

2. *Aristocratic Socialism* : Annie Besant was against representative democracy. Like Plato she wanted to entrust the function of Government to a selected class of people. Criticising representative democracy as Majoritarianism she said, "...our ideal of Brotherhood applied to Government claims power for the wise and not for the ignorant; places law-making in the hands of those who understand the complex problems of industry, and not in the hands of those who only know the needs of the household, or perhaps the needs of the town. The people have a right to happiness, but they can never get it for themselves by physical force, by legal violence, and by competition, they must be guided to it by knowledge by those who understand." ¹³ She wanted a socialism based on common agreement leading to the realisation of mutually beneficial and enjoyable adjustment of capacities and functions. Condemning mass socialism she said, "A democratic Socialism, controlled by votes, guided by numbers, can never succeed; a truly aristocratic Socialism, controlled by duty, guided by wisdom, is the next step upward in civilization." ¹⁴

3. *Spiritual Nationalism* : Annie Besant started the Gospel of spiritual nationalism which was later on expressed in the writings of Sri Aurobindo, Rabindranath Tagore and M. K. Gandhi. In her presidential speech at the Calcutta session of Indian National Congress she said, "For. what is a Nation? It is a spark of the Divine

Fire, a fragment of the Divine life, outbreathed into the world, and gathering round itself a mass of individuals, men, women and children, whom it binds together into one. Its qualities, its powers, in a word, its type, depend on the fragment of the Divine Life embodied in it... The magic of Nationality is the feeling of oneness, and the use of nationality is to serve the world in the particular way for which its type fits it." ¹⁵ Thus each nation is a unique expression of the Divine. Each nation has an individuality and character and its sole *Swadharma* is to express its own character. In the words of Annie Besant, "A Nation is distinctly an Individual with a Character, and that character depends on the nature of the spirit at its core, and its gradual unfolding to play its part in humanity as a whole.... If India still survives all who were her contemporaries five thousand years ago, it is because the same spirit lives in her national body as lived in it then."¹⁶ In the constitution of a Nation she considered national religion as the most important element. She was all praise for India and thought very high about her role in the future world. She adored Hinduism and considered it as the most important world religion.

Annie Besant's writings about the mission of India can be equated with the writings of Vivekananda and Aurobindo on this issue. Pointing out the importance of maintaining national individuality she wrote, "No two individuals are alike, and similarly, no two Nations are alike. It is the totality of all Nations that builds up Humanity — the human reflection of Ishvara Himself. Each has its own individuality. That which makes the richness of the national life of India is its marvellous literature, its history, its religion, its science — and all these are so highly evolved because the Nation is so ancient a Nation. During the early life of a Nation, religion is an essential for the binding together of the individuals who make the Nation. India was born, as it were, in the womb of Hinduism, and her body was far long shaped by that religion. Religion is a binding force, and India has had a longer binding together by religion than any other Nation in the world, as she is the oldest of the living Nations."¹⁷

Applauding the rôle of India in the history of the world Annie Besant, in her presidential speech to Indian National Congress at Calcutta, said, "Is there any other land which evokes such love for her spirituality, such admiration for her literature, such homage for valour, as this glorious Mother of Nations, from whose womb went forth the races that now, in Europe and America are leading the world? And has any land suffered as our India has suffered, since her sword was broken on Kurukshetra, and the peoples of Europe and of Asia swept across her borders, laid waste her cities, and discrowned her Kings? They came to conquer, but they remained to be absorbed. At last, out of those mingled peoples, the Divine Artificer has welded a Nation, compact not only of her own virtue, but also of those her foes had brought to her, and gradually eliminating the vices which they had also brought."¹⁸

The essence of spiritual nationalism according to Annie Besant is religion. Religion is a revivifying force. It teaches solidarity. Pleading for the religious basis of spiritual nationalism, Annie Besant said, "I feel strongly... that only on the basis of religion can a true Nationality be built up. Religion itself which gives the sense of human dignity joined to the sense of human duty, and the self-respect of India could never have arisen as it has arisen today, had not the philosophies and the religions of past re-won their empire over the Indian heart; and the virtues that the great religions typify, all of which we find in this sacred land, are virtues that we need for the building of our Nation."¹⁹

Commonwealth of Nations

Annie Besant, like Mazzini, Gandhi and Sri Aurobindo had a vision of a commonwealth of Nations substituting the world empire. After the solidarity of each nation she considered it necessary to integrate all the nations in a world federation so that the ideal of world peace may be achieved. In her concept of universalism the individual, the society, the nation and finally the humanity form ever widening circles, each including the smaller one and each giving place to a wider circle. Explaining her idea of the next stage in human evolution after the realisation of spiritual nationalism, Annie Besant pointed out, "The next stage of the Plan is the

building up of a free Commonwealth of Nations in which India plays her equal part. This is why the English came here and others had to go away; and the one Nation that is free in her institutions in her own island, if not free in her practice outside her own island, is the English Nation, chosen to come here and blend with the Indian Nation in the building up now of the World Empire, to be really a World Commonwealth, not a World Empire which was to rule by force but a World Federation which was to govern by love and in peace."²⁰

Opposition of Non-Cooperation

Like Ram Mohan Roy, and Keshabchandra Sen, Annie Besant considered British rule in India as a blessing. Therefore, 'she developed differences with B. G. Tilak and even with the moderate M. K. Gandhi. She was against Gandhian programme of non-cooperation for achieving Swarajya. She levelled three main charges against Gandhian non-cooperation movement. Firstly, she considered it revolutionary. Secondly, she feared that it will create hatred between the Indian and the British. Thirdly, she thought that non-cooperation may disrupt Indian social structure. Expressing her strong feeling in this connection she said, "Non-cooperation strikes at the foundation of society which is based on cooperation and can only exist through continued cooperation. It means a reversion to anarchy, a violent breaking of all the mutual ties which bind men together. It will inevitably lead to rioting and bloodshed, which can only have one result — repression and the putting off of all improvement in our civil conditions."²¹

The above discussion about the social and political ideas of Annie Besant make it amply clear that she was one of those spiritual savants of the country who not only brought out solutions of the present problems but also looked to the future where in an integrated humanity India may fulfil a very important role. Her moderate opposition of the British and her praise for them aroused opposition of the moderates and the extremists but no one can deny that the essentials of contemporary Indian social philosophy such as spiritual nationalism, India's unique mission, and a world brotherhood had their beginnings in her thought.

*Ramkrishna Mission**Teachings of Ramkrishna Paramhansa*

Ramkrishna Paramhansa, born on 18th February 1835, influenced almost all the great men of 19th century in India. He was not at all an academic philosopher, still less a social reformer or a politician, but his great religious status and power of consciousness force influenced national leaders far and wide. In the tradition of ancient Indian philosophy and religion he preached monism. According to him reality is one though it manifests in different ways at different places. Through the help of small stories he explained to his audience that ultimately the essence of every thing is the same. The ancient Indian *Mahavakyas* of *Aham Brahmasmi* and *Tattvamasi* were the main bases of his religious teachings. He, however, synthesised Advaita Vedanta with Vaishnava cult of Bhakti. On the other hand he had equal respect for other great religions of the world including Islam, Christianity and Buddhism. He preached that the essentials of all these religions are the same and there is hardly any occasion to fight on this issue. God realisation is the aim of life and Ramkrishna could realise God not only in inner consciousness but sometimes even in his physical body. His contact so much impressed Vivekananda that the latter immediately became his desciple and toured the entire world to prach the teachings of Ramkrishna. As Socrates' ideas are known through the dialogues of Plato similarly the teachings of Ramkrishna are better known through the speeches of Vivekananda.

The chief aim of *sadhana* according to Ramkrishna is the realization of God. He preached discarding desire for material prosperity and lure for women and gold. This, however, does not require escape from the worldly life but a constant meditation upon God. Ramkrishna believed that passions can be eliminated by their re-direction towards God. He explained this idea by several parables such as :

"As an unchaste woman, busily engaged in household affairs, is all the while thinking of her secret lover, even so, O thou man of the world, do thy round of worldly duties : but fix thy heart always on the Lord."

"As a wet nurse in a rich family brings up the child of her master, loving the baby as if it were her own, but knows well that she has no claim upon it; so think ye also that you are but trustees and guardians of your children whose real father is the Lord God in Heaven." ²²

The life of Ramkrishna was a laboratory for the synthesis of great religions. He believed that all the religions of the world were true and any one may lead to salvation. He experienced that the spiritual practices in any religion were equally effective. Every religion leads to the path of salvation. He was asked how God could be both immanent and transcendent, to which he said, "Exactly as water can exist in a liquid, solid and invisible form." Again, "As water is called by different names in different languages, so different religions call God by different names like Hari, Siva, Allah, Christ, etc., but all denote the same God." ²³

He was further asked that, "If the God of every religion is the same, why is it then that the God is painted differently by different religionists?" He answered: "God is one but his aspects are different: as one master of the house is father to one, brother to another, and husband to a third, and is called by these different names by those different persons, so one God is described and called in various ways according to the particular aspect in which he appears to his particular worshippers." ²⁴ This spirit of catholicity and tolerance is the essence of the teachings of Ramakrishna and therefore of Vivekananda. Admitting his debt to Ramkrishna, Vivekananda, while delivering an address at the Shakespeare club of Pasadena, California, on January 27, 1900 said: "Now all the ideas that I preach are only an attempt to echo his ideas. Nothing is mine originally except the wicked ones. But every word that I have ever uttered which is true and good, is simply an attempt to echo his voice." ²⁵

Aims and Ideals of Ramkrishna Mission

On May 5, 1897 a meeting of the disciples of Ramakrishna under the leadership of Swami Vivekananda unanimously adopted the following aims and ideals of Ramakrishna mission:

"1. The Association (Sangha) shall be known as the Ramkrishna Mission.

2. (a) This new Mission is to preach the truths which Srī Ramkrishna has, for the good of humanity, preached and demonstrated by practical application in his own life, and to help others to put these truths into practice in their lives for their temporal, mental and spiritual advancement.

(b) To conduct the activities of the movement for the establishment of fellowship among the followers of different religions, knowing them all to be so many forms only of one underlying Eternal Religion.

3. Its methods of action are :

(a) to train men so as to make them competent to teach such knowledge or sciences as are conducive to the material and spiritual welfare of the masses.

(b) to promote and encourage arts and industries, and

(c) to introduce and spread among the people in general Vedantic and other religious ideas in the way in which they are elucidated in the life of Sri Ramakrishna.

4. It should have two branches of action :

(a) Indian Work Department and

(b) Foreign Department.

(a) The activities of the Indian Department should be directed to the establishment of Maths and Ashrams in different parts of India for the training of Sannyasins and such of the householders as may be willing to devote their lives to the teaching of others ;

(b) Whereas its work in the Foreign Department should be to send trained members of the order to countries outside India to start centres there for the preaching of Vedanta in order to bring about a close relation and better understanding between India and foreign countries.

5. The aims and the objects of the Mission being purely spiritual and humanitarian, it shall have no connection with politics.

6. Anyone who believes in the Mission of Sri Ramakrishna, or who sympathizes or is willing to cooperate with the above mentioned aims and objects of the Association, is eligible for the membership." ²⁶

Under the able presidentship of Vivekananda, Ramakrishna mission did very important work in the field of social and religious

reform. Its branches were spread throughout the country and even outside India. After Vivekananda the illustrious followers of the mission such as Swami Yogananda and Swami Brahmananda carried out the work of the mission.

The foregoing account does not exhaust the list of reform societies that sprang up during this period. It was a very fertile period for reform work. In 1861 Shivdayal, a businessman belonging to Agra, established the Radhaswami Satsang. This group makes no distinctions of caste or creed, and treats the guru as an incarnation of God. This group continues its existence in Dayalbagh in Agra. In 1808 the Dev Samaj was started by Shivanarain Agnihotri who had originally been one of the staunch followers of Brahmo Samaj. In 1873, Sanatan Dharma Rakshini Sabha was born in Calcutta, its avowed aim being to propagate the Sanatan Hindu religion.

Muslim Reform Movements

It would appear that all the movements for religious reform during the nineteenth century centred around Hindu society, but this is not precisely true since the Muslim society also had its fair share of such movements. Religious awakening overflowed from the Hindu section of society to the Muslim section. In Delhi the people were advised to fashion their lives on lines indicated in the Koran, by Shah Abdul Aziz. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan tried to put an end to many of the malpractices that had spread among the Muslims, while Karamat Ali Jaunpuri succeeded in organising the Muslims of East Bengal in the religious revolution. His followers encouraged the Muslims to turn to western methods of education. Similar reform work was done by Maulvi Chirag Ali who was opposed to the practice of bigamy among the Muslims. He was all in favour of education and the pursuit of knowledge. In the 19th century Abdul Ahmed started the Ahmedia movement by emphasising the importance of moral and spiritual teaching. He claimed to be the messenger of God. But the most important reform movement was initiated by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan which made him the leader of progressive Muslims in India during the present period. He pointed out the need for a westernized educa-

tion and methodology of thinking among the Muslims. It was he who established the Muslim University at Aligarh. He also wrote a commentary on Koran.

REFERENCES

1. Appendix to *Brahma Dharma Grantha*, quoted *Autobiography*, p. 6.
2. "Farewell Offering of Devendranath Tagore," *Autobiography*, pp. 292-93.
3. Bipin Chandra Pal, *Ram Mohan Roy Birth Centenary Volume*, Part-II, pp. 203-205.
4. *Works of Ram Mohan Roy*, Calcutta, Brahmo Samaj, (1928) Vol. I, p. 222.
5. J. C. Ghosh, *The English Works of Raja Ram Mohan Roy*, Srikanto Roy, Calcutta, 1901, Introduction.
6. *The English Works of Ram Mohan Roy*, Vol. III, p. 327.
7. Keshab Chandra Sen, *Lectures in India*, p. 127.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 51.
9. "Asia's Message to Europe", *Lectures in India*, p. 507.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 506.
11. Annie Besant, *Civil and Religious Liberty*. 1883.
12. Annie Besant, *The Changing World*, 1909.
13. *Ibid.*
14. Annie Besant, *The New India*, July 30, 1931.
15. Annie Besant, *How India Fought For Freedom*, p. 11.
16. Annie Besant, *Lectures on Political Science*, 1918.
17. Annie Besant, *The New India*, February 21, 1917.
18. Annie Besant, *The Future of Indian Politics*, p. 314-15.
19. Annie Besant, *The New India*, Sept. 27, 1917.
20. Annie Besant, *The Great Plan*, 1920.
21. Annie Besant, *Builder of New India*. pp. 115-116.
22. Max Muller, *Ramkrishna : His Life and Sayings*, Longmans, Green and Co. (I. Ed, 1898) p. 179.
23. Majumdar, R. C., *Swami Vivekananda, A Historical review*, General Printers and Publishers Pvt. Ltd., Calcutta-13, p. 14.
24. *Ibid.*
25. *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. VII, p. 79.
26. *Centenary Memorial Volume*, pp. 130-1

Chapter IX

SOCIAL CHANGE IN CONTEMPORARY INDIAN SOCIETY

The feature of unity in diversity in Indian culture presented in an earlier Chapter is but one aspect of the contemporary social scene. The second aspect would be the description of the nature, directions and factors of social change in India. In this Chapter a brief description of these aspects would be given.

Nature and Directions of Social Change in India

Change in the Social Philosophy Viewpoints

Nothing is static in this universe. No human society remains the same for all times. Social change is natural to all societies and the Indian society is no exception to this rule. Therefore, historical survey of any period would reveal that along with economic, political and ideological changes, social changes are also taking place. In our country the process of integration and disintegration of states has always been going on. At times small states came together to become an empire and at other times big empires split into small units. This dual process has had its varying impact on the social structure. The formation of big states cemented the unity among people and their disintegration encouraged diversity. The viewpoints in social philosophy in India have always been in a melting pot. It is of course a fact that in comparison with Western countries social change has been much less rapid in India and this truth will be more clearly brought out in our discussion on 'Tradition and Modernity'. However,

this should not give us the impression that there is no tangible social change in India. Whenever any particular viewpoint in social philosophy became ascendant, its rival viewpoint appeared on the scene. For example, atheistic ideologies of Charvaka, Buddhism and Jainism appeared on the scene in reaction against the Vedic ritualism. They opposed orthodoxy and traditionalism. This reaction gave birth to many social changes. Historically, these changes were harmful to the country. For example, the spread of Buddhism eroded the defence potential and protective capability of the country. In order to revitalize the society the ideology of Vedanta came to the fore. Adi Shankaracharya refurbished in a powerful form the ancient Indian philosophy and its powerful impact virtually drove Buddhism away from its land of birth. In the modern times there was a social reaction against the long period of slavery to the British influence. In the contemporary India, the thinkers like Aurobindo, Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Radhakrishnan, Vivekananda, Ramkrishna and Dayananda presented the ancient philosophy of Vedanta in the modern garb. In this reaction two varying ideologies are clearly to be seen. On the one hand, thinkers like Dayananda revived the ancient Vedic philosophy and the thinkers like Aurobindo and Radhakrishnan tried to harmonize it with the western thought. On the other hand, contemporary thinkers like M. N. Roy presented a new rationalist outlook under the impact of materialist and naturalist philosophies. This brief analysis clearly shows that the slow change in the ideological structure of social philosophy has been taking place in India and that it has never been so rapid or sharp as to sever the link with the tradition. From this point of view it can be maintained that the social change in India has been by and large tradition bound.

Changes in Social Institutions

In the Indian society we can perceive a constant change in the traditions and social practices. In the spheres of family, marriage, caste system, social, economic and political institutions there have taken place significant changes. The joint families are now shrinking and are gradually turning into nuclear families. There is also

significant change in the system of marriage. Child marriage is now illegal and has become a rare phenomenon. Re-marriage of widows is now taking place. Women have been granted the share in the property of their parents and husbands. Now they are also free to adopt a child. The spread of education among women has made them enlightened and they are now participating in every walk of life. In urban areas they have become much more mobile. As women are now stirring out of their homes in order to earn their livelihood, a considerable change in the structure of the Indian Society is taking place.

Changes in Caste System

In modern India caste system is an outcome of a long period of Varna system which is mentioned in Vedas. Over the period of its development it has been undergoing changes. Many castes sprung up in the process of this change and the castes have competed with each other to gain a higher status in society. In this struggle for supremacy many castes did succeed in improving their social status. Thus in the social hierarchy as a whole, there is little change in the caste system. The role of caste panchayats which used to exercise great influence on its members has got diluted somewhat. Gradually, the number of these Panchayats has also dwindled. In contemporary India, due to political factors, the castes are gaining in importance and influence; but, on the other hand, the spread of education, industrialization, urbanization and democratic forces militate against the strength and influence of castes. The future form of caste system in India is rather uncertain. But, however, this much is certain that this system has never been constant and same in the course of its history and that it is bound to undergo change in the future.

Jajmani System

In India the economic structure of the society was never divorced from the social structure. Generally, the two have been closely inter-linked. For example, the relations between the members of the various castes in the rural India are governed by the Jajmani system. Jajmani system determines both the economic and social relations. Under the Jajmani system certain castes are

jajmans of other castes. The relationship of Jajmani is governed by traditions and Jajmaniship is transferable also. In contemporary India, on account of changes in the caste system and particularly due to political awakening in the lower castes the Jajmani system is packing up. Now the relations among the members of various castes are governed not by Jajmani system but by economic and political considerations.

Industrial Change

The social changes in India have been considerably affected by the industrial and technological changes. In comparison to other countries there is a gap between the social and technical change in this country. However, as a consequence of contact with Western countries, rapid adoption of new techniques of production communication, distribution and management is taking place. The metropolitan towns of India compare favourably with the western metropolises in respect of technical advancement. But, on the other hand, the social relations in India and West are quite different. Though social changes have taken place everywhere, in India the social change is very slow compared to the Western countries. In the Asian countries a rapid industrial and social change has taken place in Japan but such a change has not occurred in India. An important causal factor for the disparity between the industrial and social change in our country is political. In the struggle for independence our political leaders also gave the call for Indianization. The Britishers wanted to encourage industrialization and westernization in India. The Swadeshi movement proved to be a hindrance in this process and an attempt was made to revive old values in all walks of life. The thinkers like Aurobindo showed the superiority of the ancient Indian values and by their powerful arguments silenced the critics. From the political viewpoint the Swadeshi movement was a progressive phenomenon, but in the social sphere it balked the social change and mobility. In contemporary India there is a clear trend towards democratization in social change. In the economic, social and political spheres, the values of freedom and equality are getting encouragement. Social control is lessening and individuals are now exercising more and more their

discretion and reason to decide what to do. The control of family has also become lax and love marriages are now not uncommon.

Importance of Elite

In order to appreciate the structure of social change in India we should have an idea about the role of the elite. The elite is under the influence of urban and industrial civilization. The scientific outlook of West has particular impact upon it. Thus the elite is on the whole working for rapid social transformation on the western lines; but in certain respects it is bound by traditions. Therefore, among the urban society we find prevalent a number of superstitions, beliefs and ritualist practices. Even the inauguration of many scientific councils is marked by performance of *yajna* and *pooja*. Thus we see in the elite a coexistence of tradition and modernity. An important reason for this type of state of affairs is the broad-based nature of Hindu religion in which many contradictory influences co-exist.

Causal Factors of Social Change

In social change a number of factors operate. Among these are cultural, technical, biological, economic, geographical, psychological and ideological. A survey of social change in India would reveal the presence of all these factors. Again, these factors are themselves inter-related and interconnected. If we analyze any particular case of social change we find at bottom a web of numerous interlinked factors. These factors together produce a specific social change and it is not always easy to determine the relative strength and influence of these factors. Briefly, we can see the following main factors in the social change in India :

The Cultural Factors of Social Change

Culture is a field of values, styles, emotional attachments and intellectual trends. These values, styles and ideas affect social change. By value we understand the goal which any individual or institution tries to accomplish. For example the goal of a Hindu marriage is performance of Dharma and sexual intercourse for procreation. In modern times the impact of Dharma has declined

quite a bit and the necessity of limited family has tended to make pleasure the chief goal of marriage. Due to this change in values the institution of marriage has become rather unstable. This has encouraged disintegration of family. In the past the father used to enjoy a privileged status; every member of the family considered it his sacred duty to follow his command. In contemporary Indian society a generation gap is quite visible.

Among the cultural causal factors operating in the Indian Society the following are the main :

(a) *Sanskritization* : The structure of Indian society is based upon caste system. There is hierarchy of the castes and certain castes are considered upper and certain others the lower. According to Varna system Brahmins were on the top rung of the society because they were the preservers of the culture. After them Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra occupied the second, third and the fourth rungs. The varna system was based on the cultural values. The higher castes were considered to be culturally higher also. In the caste system the social hierarchy is not strictly based upon the varna hierarchy. At some places Brahmins were considered at the top but at other places, on account of political and economic factors, Kshatriyas occupied better status. The higher castes control and govern the behaviour of the lower castes and the lower castes try to carry out the dictates of the higher castes. According to M. N. Srinivas, by sanskritization we do not mean only the adoption of new habits and traditions but also the expression of new ideas and values. In the phenomenon of sanskritization, the chief caste finds a place of pride in the social hierarchy but the lower castes follow it with great care and caution because blind following leads to harmful effects. According to Dr. D. N. Majumdar in India the process of sanskritization and de-sanskritization are going on side by side. A detailed consideration of sanskritization will be taken up later.

(b) *Westernization* : In the modern times a widespread influence of the western culture has lead to many important social changes. Therefore, westernization is a vital factor in social change. The detailed description of westernization will be taken up later in the

book. Westernization has produced profound changes in the structure of family and marriage, personal relations, female education, social mobility etc. It has also affected in important ways the ideological and value system; the means of social control have also undergone change. Along with westernization, the materialist and scientific outlook of the West has also produced profound changes in the thinking of Indians. The philosophies of utilitarianism, pragmatism and individualism have also affected the Indian Society. Still the cultural fall out from the industrialization and urbanization due to West is less than what it could be.

(c) *Secularization* : The ancient Indian civilization was dominated by religion; but under the influence of westernization it is becoming increasingly secular these days. Under the influence of secularization the influence of religion over social institutions, traditions, practices and usages is declining and in its place utilitarianism and personal predilections govern human behaviour. After independence the Indian government has adopted the ideal of secularism. This has given impetus to the process of secularization.

(d) *Democratization* : In modern times, democracy is generally regarded to be the best form of government in the West. The main reason for this is that the democratic values of freedom, equality and fraternity are in tune with modern consciousness and thinking. After independence, a democratic government was established in our country. Though democracy in social relationships is a distant goal, there is sufficient progress in this regard in other fields. The decentralization of power and the recognition of democratic values is leading to decline in the obscurantist forces and the differences based upon caste, religion, sex and region are becoming less marked. Untouchability has been declared illegal. All individuals are equal before law. Every individual has full freedom of undertaking any profession; he is also free to marry anywhere; receive education from any place and associate himself with anybody, institution or organisation. Many important steps have been undertaken for the upliftment of women and backward classes.

(e) *Politicization* : After independence the Indian Constitution conferred voting rights upon every adult. This means that every

worker, every peasant and whosoever is above 21, and not insane, is entitled to vote. This has indeed taken politics to every corner of India and all Indian villages are today agog with political activity. Almost the entire length and breadth of India is now covered by radio network and millions of people are now able to see the television. This has kindled deep interest in politics everywhere. Around the election time this interest is all the more intense. In election every party and each candidate try their level best to wrest power. With the abolition of feudal lords the power is now concentrated in the hands of politicians. Therefore the political factors have become dominant levers of social change. Due to political factors mainly, people support and oppose untouchability. Due to political factors alone the disintegrating tendencies like casteism, parochialism and communalism are raising their forehead. Linguistic chauvanism is encouraged on account of political factors. In many social communities there is new life and strength on account of politics. Today there is so much politicization in India that the social changes in both rural and urban India are governed by politics. More of this will be discussed later.

Economic Factors of Social Change

In the contemporary society, economic factors are the most crucial determinants of social change. Not only in India, but all over the world, economic factors play crucial role in social change. Briefly, following are the main economic factors.

(a) *Industrialization* : The detailed consideration of this factor will be taken up later in this Chapter. Industrialization is the most important factor of social change in the world. Industrialization is the basis of modernity and no country can afford to ignore it. This is so because man wants to conquer Nature and this is possible only through industrialization. Industrialization is the indicator of cultural progress and no country can make any headway without industrialization. The only way to grapple successfully with the bursting population growth is industrialization. Indeed the progress of any country is directly proportionate to the progress of industrialization in it. Industriali-

zation has led to urbanization in India. This has encouraged trade and improved the means of communication.

(b) *Urbanization* Though urbanization has also taken place due to causes other than the economic, these have been primary. Among economic causes, industrialization has been the chief factor in urbanization. All over the world the number of big towns and their development is on the increase. And India is no exception to this rule. In India also the number of big towns has gone up and with the increase in their number a distinct urban civilization has sprung up. As a consequence of urbanization, the characteristics like materialism, individualism, social rapidity, impersonality and mobility have increased. Besides, there is change in the inter-sexual relations and the family is disintegrating. The nuclear family is coming to replace the joint family. There is also increase in the pre-marital and extra-marital relations. This aspect will be discussed further later in this chapter.

(c) *Technological changes*: The technological factors have made considerable contribution to the social change. The introduction of power-driven machines and vehicles and adoption of sophisticated means of communication have brought about considerable change in the society and this has profoundly affected marriage and family. The direct impact of industrial advance can be seen in the organization of labour, the division of labour, specialization, fast life and mass production. Its indirect impact can be perceived in urbanization and unemployment, crime, juvenile delinquency and class-war consequent upon it. Use of machines in industry has led to fast urbanization and the springing up of factories. As a consequence of urbanization, new classes have come into being and new ideological movements have been born. The status of women has undergone sea-change. Values have undergone drastic transformation. Materialism, individualism, specialization etc. are the result of technological changes. In the urban life technological advance has produced decline in the community feeling, over-valuation of time, decline in social control, decline in moral standards, increase in crimes and the rise of tendencies conducive to disintegration of the individual and the society. The social

change consequent upon technological change can be explained by a simple example. Previously, when cars had to be started by the use of handle, women did not drive cars, but now with the introduction of automatic starter in the cars many well to do women can be seen driving cars. This has also led to change in dress, mobility and thinking. There is change of value outlook.

Biological Factors of Social Change

In the biological factors is chiefly included the geometrical rise in the population. The excess or lack of adequate population, its distribution lead to widespread social changes. For example, the influx of labour force in millions to big industrial towns in India has led to upsetting man-woman ratio. This has given rise to many problems : (1) Prostitution, (2) Mental diseases, (3) Juvenile delinquency etc. The excess of population in a country leads to decline in health standards and increase in poverty. This fact is ubiquitous in India. The excess in population has also lead to vast changes in social values. In India there is a problem of slums and overcrowding. This leads to steep deterioration in the morals of slum dwellers. This is why the government is so keen on family planning. There is a wide publicity of techniques of birth control. This has led to change in sexual morality. Now, there can be seen the beginning of sexual permissiveness. In order to meet the food and shelter requirements of the growing populace new techniques are being used. The basic flaw in the demographic structure in India is the greater proportion of rural populace and the high incidence of birth and death.

Tradition & Modernity in Social Change

In social change in India we find trends both in modernity and tradition. The detailed study of this topic has been done in this chapter later on. Whereas the tradition-bound tendencies come in the way of rapid westernization, secularization, democratization, urbanization and industrialization, the modern trends are conducive to these progressive changes. Indeed modernity is a result or product of science, technology and westernization. Tradition is

backed by Swadeshi movement. There are today in our country different political groups representing tradition and modernity. They act according to their social philosophies.

Planning Social Change

As the social sciences have progressed it is now considered desirable that social change should be planned and well-directed. Though social changes are always taking place on account of various social factors, it is better if these changes are directed towards some particular goal which brings common-weal to all. This work is known as planning. In India Five Year Plans have been taken up for economic planning. However, these plans are aimed at not only economic planning but also social planning.

The above account of social changes in India and an enquiry into the causes and factors responsible for the change clearly suggest that the pattern of social change in India is like that of West. Though it must be admitted that social change should suit the local conditions, but unless the impediments like superstitions, beliefs, orthodoxy and blind adherence to tradition are removed no meaningful pattern of social change can emerge. It is not possible to make rapid progress in social planning without abandoning the unscientific attitude towards life. The contemporary Indian Society is passing through a period of transition. How the Indian Society will shape in future cannot be safely predicted but if the change has to occur in desirable directions, the goals that we wish to accomplish must be determined in advance and then an effort should be made to achieve them in a planned way. For this purpose cooperation between the government and people is essential; but above all the elite must realize its duty and must do the work of enlightenment. It must endeavour to inculcate the scientific outlook among people. Without a powerful elite there can be little progress in the country and so far the elite is not a very effective class in India. In elite we find both rightist and leftist trends. Will these ultimately harmonize? Nothing can be predicted. Everything is in a melting pot at the moment.

Tradition & Modernity in India

In India today we can see social change in the various walks of life. The goals of this change have been variously described. Social change in India is taking place through the instrumentality of factors like urbanization, industrialization, westernization, secularization, democratization and sanskritization. In the perspective of contradictory goals being pursued through social change in India the social scientists have pointed towards the interaction of tradition and modernity. Whereas certain trends of social changes are trying to preserve and revive the traditional values, other trends are working towards modernization on the pattern of advanced Western countries. Whether the wave, nay, the storm of modernity sweeping through the country will root out lock stock and barrel every vestige of tradition or some permanent traditional values would stay, the social scientists are divided in their opinion on this matter. Here we would first of all define the concepts of modernity and tradition and then evaluate the relative role of both factors in social change in India.

In June 1960, the tenth congress for cultural freedom took place in Berlin. This congress came into being ten years earlier. In this conference a review was made of the progress in the last decade in solving the problems faced by modern society. In this survey it was tried to evaluate as to how much progress was made towards the ideal of freedom in the political, social and cultural spheres. It cannot be overemphasized that the ideal of freedom is the basic plank of modernity. This conference set up four committees. The first committee went into the condition of social progress, the second committee studied the question of culture and the third and the fourth committees went into the questions of counter-culture and tradition. This conference worked in six stages under the Chairmanship of Prof. Edward Shils of Chicago University. One Committee discussed the question of modernity and tradition in the developing societies of Asia and Africa. In this discussion a number of important points were raised. The role of modernity and tradition in social change in the developing

countries was very relevant to the current scene. However, this topic was not discussed in detail because it was not the main theme of discussion. The main theme of discussion was "Social Progress". The harmonization of tradition and modernity in the Asian and African Societies had not been discussed intensively. In this conference also it failed to get the full attention.

In November 1961, Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom in cooperation with the office for Asian Affairs arranged a Seminar in New Delhi on *Modernity and Tradition in India*. Under the Chairmanship of Dr. C. D. Deshmukh about twenty intellectuals participated in the discussion. The Committee published the proceedings of the seminar in the book *Tradition and Modernity in India* which was edited by Prof. A.B. Shah and Dr. C.R.M. Rao. Many useful points emerged regarding Modernity and Tradition in this book. Though there was no unanimity on any issue, the Seminar nevertheless offered many useful hints for future planning.

The main themes which came up for discussion in this seminar were : 'the meaning of tradition and modernity,' 'the problem of interaction between tradition and modernity', 'How far Hindu tradition is harmonizable with modernity,' 'what may be accepted from tradition and what must be rejected?' etc. As referred to earlier, there was no unanimity on any of these points in the conference.

What is Tradition?

In the above seminar no definite meaning was given to the term tradition though it was explained in a broad sense. Both the terms tradition and modernity are a system of ideas, a system of values and a system of institutions. The system of ideas, values and institutions are different in tradition and modernity. Therefore, the worlds of tradition and modernity are different though there is no society which is purely modern or purely traditional. Dr. Yogendra Singh,¹ who contributed a paper in the above mentioned seminar, has tried to define the term tradition in the following words : "Tradition is a cumulative heritage of a society which permeates through all levels of social organization, for example, the value system, the social structure and the

structure of personality." ¹ Thus tradition is a social heritage. In this social heritage there are three levels — a system of values, a social structure and as a consequence of which a personality structure. This is the sociological interpretation of tradition. There can be other interpretations as well, for example, the metaphysical and historical interpretations. The sociological interpretation of tradition is functional. The metaphysical interpretation of tradition pertains to those truths which are the expression of ancient wisdom and which are undying. In these truths is to be found metaphysical unity. From the historical viewpoint there is rise and fall of every tradition. Tradition is based upon spiritual forces which are beyond the human comprehension and are therefore divinely inspired. All traditions do not form a self harmonious system but are born, flourish and drop out according to their own destiny. The historical interpretation of tradition is based upon the philosophical meaning of the term.

Both historical and metaphysical interpretations of the term tradition are not relevant to social sciences. In social science we go by the functional meaning of the term. The functional meaning of the term tradition is rather a phenomenon. Though there is always some development taking place in every society there are certain elements like value system, social structure and the structure of personality which remain more or less permanent. These elements may be called tradition.

Concept of Modernity

In order to understand the problem of tradition and modernity in India, it is most desirable to be clear about the concept of modernity. The concept of modernity is based upon the social structure prevailing in highly advanced countries like U.S.A. and Great Britain. Dr. Lerner in his book *The Passing of Traditional Society -- Modernizing of Middle East* has recounted five characteristics of modernity based upon the social structure of Western society. The first characteristic is rapid urbanization; the second is growing literacy; the third is meaningful concourse of ideas among people by means of news media, radio, television and books etc; the fourth is increase in proficiency and skill which builds up

man power to support the economic progress of the country ; the fifth is the growth of political consciousness.

Modernity is a consequence of industrialization. The revolution wrought by industrialization laid the germs of modernity. In as much as industrial revolution took place first in the West the social structure of the West is understood to be the model of modernity.

The concept of modernity is wider than that of modernization. By modernization we understand a high level of literacy, culture and urbanization. Due to it geographic mobility increases and mechanization invades most of the walks of life. On the other hand, modernity is a different indicator of culture whose characteristics are discernment, broad mindedness, diversity, secularism and the respect for the individual. Thus modernity implies a respect for the opinion of others and a freedom to follow one's own ideas.

An important aspect of modernity is pluralism, particularly the cultural and value pluralism. As a society moves from traditionalism to modernity, the new knowledge, novel experiences and new realm of values come into being. The traditional European society was dominated by religious orthodoxy and the modern European society is based upon science and technology. Thus in modernity there is compartmentalization of knowledge and experience and new areas of knowledge and experience open out.

Modernity is a result of the development and advance of practical sciences. With the development of practical sciences there is development of industrialism, individualism, democracy, freedom and the ideologies and social philosophies opposed to metaphysics and theology. This has brought forth new habits in social behaviour. Modernity is opposed to every type of orthodoxy. Nothing is believed in or relied upon because it has been prevalent for a long time. Everything is tested on the scale of reason and science. Modernity aims at power, youth, efficiency and intelligence. These are the cornerstones of modernity.

Relativity of Modernity and Tradition

Modernity is the cultural result or fall out of industrialization. With the progress in industrialization there is progress of modernity.

As industrialization has advanced maximum in the West, the western society presents the ideal of modernity but it does not follow that the Indian society must be westernized in order to become modern. Of course the Japanese society has become Western. But in India in order to modernize society it is neither advisable nor necessary to ignore and supersede the tradition altogether. In our tradition we can find a number of elements which are compatible with the modern outlook. For a healthy development of any society it is necessary to maintain a continuing link with the past and not to make any abrupt break with it. Only on the foundations of the past can we build the future. Moreover, the institutions which have stood the test of time need not be abandoned on account of industrialization, only these need be modified so as to suit the contemporary conditions.

The above is all the more true because the tradition and modernity are relative concepts. As we have referred earlier, no contemporary society can be considered to be wholly traditional or wholly modern. A society can be more modern or more traditional than another society. In comparison to U.S.A., the Indian society is more traditional while American Society is modern compared to the Indian Society. It cannot be maintained that the Indian Society is absolutely traditional and the American society absolutely modern. According to Prof Shils, "No useful purpose is served by demonstrating that there is ~~some~~ unbridgeable gap between any two societies. A traditional society is never wholly traditional and totally bereft of the elements of modernity nor is any modern society totally bereft of the traditional elements. It is possible that the traditions of one society may go back to a few centuries whereas the traditions of some other society may go back to thousands of years. In one society traditions may be in a rapid process of change, whereas in another society this process may be slow." In other words the transition from tradition to modernity is a constant and regular process though its pace and speed may vary from society to society. In contemporary society the transition from tradition to modernity is rapid on account of the fast pace of industrialization. The importance of tradition is that

it is tested and is based upon long practical experience. For example, marriages everywhere are based upon traditional rites but now-a-days these are undergoing some modifications.

Traditional Cultural Standards In India

In accordance with the definition of "tradition" given above we can discuss the following aspects of cultural traditions in India.

1. *Characteristics of social organization* : The features of Indian social organization are caste system, joint family, rural Panchayats and other democratic rural organizations. This has been already discussed. In the traditional social organization in India a powerful structure was erected for the determination of social relations functions and situations. This helped the establishment of a permanent social organization in India. The social rewards and values were determined in accordance with the basic values of the society. From the rural panchayats to state governments a balance was struck between the demands of centralization and decentralization. The caste system is the basis of social stratification of Indian society. In the caste system, the social status of a person is determined by the basic values of Hindu Society. The professions are also determined by the castes and this further cements the social organization. In rural India the relations between various castes are governed by the Jajmani system. The division of labour among the various castes is also determined by Jajmani system. The social status and functions are also determined by the Jajmani system. The caste system and consequent social stratification has saved Indian society from the scourge of class war. The political struggle in India has been confined to upper castes so far and the lower castes have remained out of its orbit. Even change of kingly dynasties did not affect much the rural India. In the Western countries the principles of social and economic stratifications are different and this induces flexibility and mobility in the social organization. In India the principles of social and economic stratifications have remained identical.

2. *Machine and cottage industry* : The traditional economic system is based upon machine and cottage industry. Money has little value in this system; most of exchange is done through barter

system. There are no big industries and therefore the processes of social change are slow. Modernization is a consequence of industrialization. As in the traditional Indian Society there is little industrialization, there is no fillip to modernization as well. As the traditional cottage industry based upon economic system undergoes changes and turns into an industrialized economic system, the processes of modernization would quicken. The industrial civilization is widely different from the traditional civilization. In industrial civilization the science and technology advance and as a consequence of this social changes take place rapidly. Under it the thinking and actions of the individuals are controlled from outside. Democracy is a result of this civilization. Not only from the economic point of view but from the point of view of morality and organization, modernity is very different from tradition. In India there is a tussle between the traditional social philosophy and modern ideas to get an upper hand. With the establishment of modern civilization in India we find the emergence of nationalism, democracy, vertical mobility and universal education. The class struggle is inevitably due to it. It takes the society towards individualism. The social relations become personalized and there is loosening of social control. The industrial civilization robs men of their conscience and faith. The behaviour of the individual is determined not by traditional modes or conscience of the individual but by the behaviour of others. The processes of socialization and personality formation are quite different in the two. This difference is evident not only if we compare the Indian and the American civilizations but also in comparisons of the old and new social conditions in India. This is so because the modern Indian society is gradually changing into an industrialized society. The modern Indian society is flexible and synthetic. Indian civilization is a synthesis of many tendencies. The synthetic approach is favourable to industrialization. As Indian culture in the past has been absorbing and assimilating the new elements, it is possible that it may adjust to industrial change without conflict. Indian culture is passing through a period of transition and in the transitional period there is a conflict between old and new values.

A new social structure and new values are coming into being. There is much progress towards this after independence. In this transitional period there is a need for an intellectual class which can formulate appropriate values and disseminate them among the public. This change is also taking place though there is as yet paucity of this class. In the five year plans we find a blue print of change from the old to new society.

3. *Importance of traditional values in the life of an individual* : In the traditional Indian Culture there are guidelines for all sorts of activities of the individual. For example, the idea of Purushartha provides the traditional goals of life to an Indian. The ideas of Dharma (duty), Artha (livelihood), Kama (Sex), and Moksha (liberation) inspire Indians to lead the life of Brahmacharya (Celibacy), Grahastha (Household), Vanaprastha (pilgrimage) and Sanyas (Renunciation). In Dharmashastras in India there are long lists of duties, both categorical and conditional. The duties and rights obligatory upon the individuals at the various stages of life are fully enumerated. These obligations are more or less the same for all classes. If the behaviour of a man is inspired and determined by these considerations it will be said to be traditional. For example, if at the time of marriage, starting business etc. the consideration is given as to what the tradition dictates or one consults the astrologers and priests for this purpose then the behaviour is traditional. A man of orthodox views goes by tradition in whatever he does, and follows the tradition religiously. He is not at all critical and is averse to applying his reason or discrimination. In as much as there is a uniform set of traditions in any society there is little variety in the behaviour in a tradition bound society. For example, in India at the time of marriage elders are consulted for every minute detail. No ceremony is formalized without their prior approval. On the other hand, a man of modern outlook does everything according to the light of his own reason.

4. *Hierarchical* : According to Indian culture caste distinctions are based upon the fundamental differences in human nature and the personalities of different individuals. The Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras are different in their temperament and

aptitudes. In other words, the distinctions among castes were made upon the basis of human nature and temperament though the distinction was not grounded on scientific facts. While it is true that in certain Gurukuls, the guru used to determine the castes after taking into account the individual temperaments; but there was nothing scientific about it.

5. *Influence of sacrosanct values* : In India the system of values is based upon a religious and spiritual outlook which cares little for the practical and utilitarian. - In the Purushartha system of values, Moksha gets the highest priority. Though the possibility of liberation during life is not denied yet by and large it is a transcendental and extra-terrestrial goal. In ancient India, some heterodox systems, while not acknowledging the authority of Vedas have nevertheless adopted transcendental Moksha as the ultimate goal of life; only Charvaka philosophy is an exception. According to Charvaka, moksha is impossible; only pleasure is the sole aim of human life. Material goods are a means of attaining pleasure. No wise man would sacrifice the mundane pleasure in the false hope of some heavenly gains or bliss. A bird in hand is better than two in the bush according to this philosophy Charvakas do not believe in God, Soul, heaven etc. They have ridiculed the orthodox philosophies; there is no heaven, there is no final liberation; nor is there any thing transcendental and the duties prescribed by scriptures are of little avail. Agnihotra, three Vedas, the travails, the *tapas*, and besmearing one's body with ashes are the source of livelihood for persons lacking both in knowledge and action. If an animal offered in sacrifice goes to heaven one may better sacrifice his parents to ensure their place in heaven. If the food offered in Shradha can satiate the hunger of the dead, one needlessly carries food while going on travel. As long as there is breath in one's body one should enjoy the life; one should live with joy even if he has to undergo debts because the life once ended can never be revived.

As referred to earlier, the philosophy of Charvaka is an exception in Indian thought and the generally accepted values of Indian life. Synthesis of philosophy and religion, spiritual outlook, belief

in Moksha and transmigration of soul and theory of Karma etc., in orthodox Indian philosophy, are quite different from these of Charvaka. The ideas of Shankara are considered to be the highest culmination of Indian thought.

According to Shankara, Absolute, the Brahman alone is real, the world is an illusion and there is no duality between Brahman and Atman. Thus Shankara believed in the theory of Maya. The theory of Maya is a fundamental plank of Indian social philosophy. As a consequence of this the material goods are very low in the scale of Indian values and the life of spirit is highly regarded.

Indian culture is religion-dominated. This is an important characteristic of Indian Culture. In other words, the values of traditional Indian Culture are determined by religion. Though there is no inherent opposition between religion and science, as has been acknowledged by Western scholars, none the less there is tension and opposition between orthodoxy and science. If we remove orthodoxy from religion we are left with a set of philosophical beliefs and a personal relation with the Divine. Such a religion cannot be the basis of a social set up as it would be like a melting pot having no fixed or definite contours. Without a set of well determined principles no social organization is possible. If a man is totally free and is under no obligations there can be no social relationship. If the Indian Culture is religious only in the sense of being spiritual and having a belief in the divine power it would not in any way obstruct the process of modernization; but this is not in fact so. The concept of liberal Hindu religion may very well be the sincere belief and conviction of a number of intellectuals but for a common man it is nothing but a set of orthodox principles and practices. In society the beliefs of a few are of little consequence. What are really important are the beliefs and practices prevalent among the masses because it is by these that the social values and organization are determined. The people free from orthodox beliefs and ideas are rapidly becoming secular. On the other hand, the people who are influenced by orthodoxy and tradition are proving to be a stumbling block in the march towards modernization.

In India most of the philosophers have disclaimed all originality for their views and have put forward their views as mere comments or elaboration of Vedas, Upanishads and Bhagwad Gita. This is a classic example of intense respect for tradition. A highly enlightened contemporary thinker like Sri Aurobindo has regarded his philosophy to be an elaboration of the philosophy of Upanishads. The main reason for this state of affairs is the fact that according to Indian philosophers Truth is eternal and unaffected by the vagaries of space and time. This truth has been revealed in the ancient scriptures. It can be reinterpreted but not altered. Therefore, Indian Philosophy has not given adequate attention to the fundamental changes in social, political and economic aspects of modern life wrought by science and technology. While it is true that the thinkers like Aurobindo, Radhakrishnan, Gandhi and Bhagwandas have clearly recognized the value of science and attempted to integrate it with the ancient values, the general outlook is by and large tradition bound and it is for the future social scientists to evaluate how far there can be synthesis of tradition and science. As a number of sociologists have pointed out, the Indian philosopher of to-day is working under the contrary pulls of tradition and modernity and it is yet to be seen how he reconciles the two. In Indian philosophy the respect for tradition is so ingrained that even when something utterly hostile to modern outlook is found in the scripture forcing its rejection, the position and status of the scriptural authority is salvaged by pointing out that the fault lies with the interpretation and not with the original doctrine. As far as Vedas, Upanishads and Gita are concerned these are above criticism and cannot possibly contain anything wrong. It is also claimed that what is not in the epic Mahabharata is nowhere else. This tendency has led many Indian thinkers to dig in ancient scriptures to show that each and every new idea is already contained in them. This attitude is of course antithetical to modernity. It is of course a moot point how far modernity is desirable. But this much is certain that too much faith and reliance in the ancient books and scriptures is a symptom of orthodoxy.

In Indian philosophy the theory of Karma has had widespread

influence on the Indian society. While it is true that the theory of Karma did not originally profess fatalism and only sustained the varna system in its pristine form, by and by it encouraged immobilisation, reaction and retrogressive tendencies in the Indian Society. The theory that man is free to act but not so in the choice of fruits of his actions because the fruition of an act depends upon factors not within his control, is quite obvious and therefore unexceptional; but disregard of consequences while performing one's duties is nothing but a prop for tradition and orthodoxy. Thus the Indian social philosophy has not changed its values and concepts with the changes in economic and social life. Therefore, it can be justifiably maintained that the Indian social philosophy is orthodox and tradition bound and that a contemporary social philosophy in India is still to emerge. Few intellectuals who have acquired a contemporary outlook under the influence of western thought have little influence over Indian thinking. The basic outlook of an average Indian is still fundamentally orthodox.

It is usually said that Indian philosophy relegates morality to a secondary place whereas in the West it occupies the position of primacy. Many contemporary Indian philosophers have tried to refute and rebut this criticism. Dr. Radhakrishnan has tried to show the validity and importance of morality even in the Advaita philosophy of Shankara and nihilism (Sunvavad) of Nagarjuna. He has stressed emphatically that though in India morality has not been accorded a place of primacy, it has nonetheless been given adequate importance and due place in the scheme of things. But if morality is regarded as transitory and the ultimate end is devoid of morality, it is small wonder that such an attitude would not provide adequate inspiration for fruitful action in society. A man who considers himself beyond good and evil and is steadfast in his aim and duty in the face of adversity may be a good person and help the social well-being; but being devoid of strong motivation of some tangible gain he would not be as effective as the person who is inspired by the irresistible lure of some mundane gain and profit. The values of Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha espoused by Indian philosophy have provided a multi-sided social

philosophy which fulfills all the needs of man; but here again the priority is given to the values of Dharma and Moksha and Moksha is considered to be the *summum bonum* of life. Thus other values get a subsidiary place and are only instrumental in character. On account of this conceptual framework, is it any wonder, that Indian thinkers have by and large neglected the social wellbeing? That is why some thinkers are of the view that the spiritual philosophy of India should be replaced by scientific outlook if there is to be progress towards modernization. The scientific outlook is quite the reverse of the point of view represented by the spiritual philosophy of India. It is quite a different issue that we may consider the spiritual outlook more valid and real than that of science, because the scientific outlook encourages materialism and this may be considered to be a hindrance in the way of spiritual progress. The foregoing review of the Indian social philosophy is made with the view to show that if there is to be progress towards modernity the traditional outlook on life must be revised and the values of scientific culture should be imbibed. In as much as the modern Indian philosophers are proving themselves to be unequal to this challenge, the interest in philosophy in our country has considerably declined. But without a sound philosophical background there can be no positive social action.

Synthesis of Tradition & Modernity

In the Western countries the trend towards modernity is due to industrialization. The progress towards modernity has been directly proportionate to the progress in industrialization. In India the thinkers like M.K. Gandhi believed that social and economic progress can be achieved without industrialization and therefore, they adhered to tradition; but after independence, lip-service to Gandhian ideals notwithstanding, India has made rapid strides in industrialization. Now it is quite clear that there will have to be more and rapid industrialization if the socio-economic problems of India are to be satisfactorily solved. But as long as we are not prepared to move from tradition to modernity we would not be able to adjust properly with the problems raised by industrialization. In U.S.A. alongwith industrialization there has

been progress towards modernization. The same process must happen in India. We cannot avoid modernization because industrialization has come to stay in India. It is therefore advisable that we plan this transition and profit by the experience of other countries so as to avoid the pitfalls faced by them. If the change does not take place in a planned manner it will take place via communism or some other means.

From the viewpoint of history Indian culture has always been absorbing and assimilating diverse trends. On coming in contact with the Western Culture some Indians wanted to go whole hog for westernization but the dominant trend was for a synthesis of the two cultures. The industrialization in India was started by the English people and this disrupted the traditional set up of the Indian society. As a matter of fact this was a clash of industrialized and developing societies. This gave rise to conflicting viewpoints in society. For some time Gandhism and Sarvodaya were the dominant philosophies but now their influence is declining. Now there is a rapid move towards westernization. Westernization is not confined to dress and mannerism but has penetrated to thought structure as well.

Contemporaneity of the Non-Contemporaneous

A tradition bound society is not necessarily a backward society because there are elements in the tradition which are of universal importance. Therefore, an attempt has been made to reconcile many an element of tradition with the modern elements. The conflict between tradition and modernity is not confined to India. Indeed it is to be found in all those societies which have won freedom recently and are trying to march towards modernity. In the newly independent countries of Asia and Africa there is conflict and tension between the forces of tradition and modernity. The problem before India is how to modernize the Indian society without violence and disintegration. It is necessary to avoid sudden break and maintain the continuity of social development. Everything cannot be abandoned and started afresh. In many ways tradition plays a crucial role. The movement from tradition to modernity is a continuous process and there is

always a period of transition. In his book *Traditional Values in Indian Life*, Dr. Sudhakar Chattopadhyaya has tried to demonstrate that the traditional values of Indian society are not antagonistic to the Western and American values and that these can be retained without sacrificing progress. Dr. Sudhakar has discussed these values in seven chapters. These are : Socio-economic life, Religion and Philosophy, Politics, Law, Arts, Science and International Relations. Our explanation of these factors is as follows :

1. *Caste and Joint Family* : In modern times the caste and joint family system have influenced the contemporary society most ; certain social values have come to light. First of all everybody no matter to which caste he belongs, is considered equal and secondly the defects of caste system have come to light. In West in the social sphere everybody has been accorded a place of dignity in society ; he is free and at full liberty to participate in social activity. In West voluntary service is highly regarded ; the place of family in society is recognized ; the value of physical and mental health is recognized. Above all the dignity and value of labour for good life are recognized. These modern values are in conflict with traditional values of joint family system in India. In the recent past there has been disintegration of joint family and caste system and this has given a fillip to modernity ; but of late there is once again a revival of casteism in India. The intensification of casteism will definitely prove to be a hindrance in the path of modernity. The same fact applies to the joint family system. Due to the influence of modernity there is disintegration of joint family. It is being maintained not so much on account of its merit but due to the fact that there is no social security in India. There are no veteran homes here.

2. *Religion and Philosophy* : In India there are certain traditional concepts about religion and philosophy. Every person here is free to pursue his religion. According to the Indian constitution no body can be divested of his political privileges and rights due to profession of a faith. India is a secular country. The Indian religion preaches mutual tolerance and is free from orthodoxy. All modern social reformers have recognized the basic unity of all religions.

M. K. Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Vivekananda and others have recognized and acknowledged the basic unity of all faiths. Wherever there is communal tension and conflict in India, the state intervenes to restore peace and harmony. In spiritual life morality occupies an important place. The new values of Indian society are quite like the values prevalent in West. In West the Church is separate from the state and everybody is free to go or not to go to Church. Usually people buttress morality by religion. The religious organizations do commendable social service. Thus even in West religion and science co-exist in peace and harmony. Therefore, in order to be modern it is not necessary to be an atheist or anti-religion. What is required for the modern outlook is the spirit of tolerance and accommodation and above all innate respect for the viewpoints of others. Many eminent scientists like Einstein, Eddington, William etc. have supported the religious values.

3. *Science* : In the sphere of science Indians have always believed that in order to improve the living conditions of men it is imperative to control Nature. Science should not be used for destructive ends. Science and technology have always received encouragement in India. All these traditional values are in tune with and favourable to modernization. The West under the influence of scientific outlook has accomplished rational and secular outlook. The philosophy of humanism which has emerged under the influence of science aims at the total transformation of the world. Generally people are of the view that science should not be employed for destructive ends. For the growth and development of science freedom of the individual is most necessary. A scientist must be objective in his outlook and should not shirk from the conclusions which follow his research. Thus the traditional Indian outlook on science is not contrary to Western viewpoint and the two can be easily reconciled. However, India has not as yet fully incorporated the scientific outlook. Among the intelligentsia both the viewpoints are discernible. On the one hand, scientific progress is regarded desirable and on the other hand there is a yearning to preserve unchanged many ancient elements. But sooner

we incorporate fully the scientific outlook and give up insistence on traditional values contrary to the scientific spirit the better would it be for the nation.

4. *Politics and Law* : In the sphere of politics the ideals of rule of law and equality before law are prevalent. The Indian constitution has upheld the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity. Though in modern times these ideals are best cherished in the West almost all objective scholars concede that the democratic tradition has flourished in India since ancient times. From times immemorial we had *Panchayats* in rural India. In ancient scriptures democracy has been described in great details. Now-a-days, however, we are facing the failure of democratic experiment. The reason for this failure is not the lack of proper tradition but illiteracy. In order to suit democracy to Indian milieu, there have been a number of amendments to our Constitution. With the removal of backwardness and illiteracy democracy is bound to flourish in India.

Three Viewpoints

The foregoing discussion of tradition and modernity makes it clear that there are a number of elements in our tradition which are favourable to modernization. This fact is known as contemporaneity of the non-contemporaneous. Therefore, India can make progress towards modernization without much conflict. Regarding the relationship between modernity and tradition there are three viewpoints in India.

1. *Optimistic outlook* : Those thinkers who subscribe to the vertical social progress point of view are of the opinion that the transition from tradition to modernity is smooth and automatic. Therefore, they support fast Westernization in India.

2. *Obscurantism* : Those thinkers who are the votaries of tradition and orthodoxy are obscurantist. Such persons do not wish to abandon tradition at any cost whatsoever. They believe that the old values are eternal and they need not be abandoned. This is a fatalist outlook.

3. *Progressivism* : Regarding the relation between tradition and modernity this is the most appropriate point of view. This strikes

a balance between the views number 1 and 2. This is neo-functionalism. According to this point of view we must progress towards modernity but without sacrificing what is best in the tradition. In the matter of ideology India is very much advanced though in socioeconomic sphere it is quite backward. To-day India needs an elite which can remove the obstacles in the way of socio-economic progress. The future shape of India cannot be described in detail because this will be governed by so many factors. No fixed pattern can be imposed to make progress. Pluralism is fundamental to modernity. The other characteristics of modernity are scientific progress, industrialization, urbanization, individualism, secularism and positivist philosophy. These characteristics can be seen in India in one form or the other though we have not fully incorporated this outlook in our life. We are at times very unscientific in our thinking and outlook. In order to remove this discrepancy we must make a planned march towards modernity.

Planned Progress

All contemporary sociologists are agreed upon this point that in order to be most productive and fruitful the socio-economic changes in society should be brought about in a well planned and organized manner. Though change is a continuous process, unless it is well directed there cannot be maximum utilization of energy. Progress means well-planned change. This functional approach to modernity has been accepted in most of the advanced countries. It is a controversial point as to what are the elements of Indian tradition which ought to be retained but all are agreed that there should be a synthesis of modernity and tradition.

Characteristics of Modernity in India

There can be different measurements to assess the progress of modernity in any country. For example, various surveys are made to determine how far people are receptive to new ideas. Both in social and economic fields new ideas and inventions are being fast adopted. Agriculture is being mechanized rapidly and new means of raising farm output are being put into practice. Fast urbanization is breaking various social barriers and different

groups of people are coming into contact with each other. In towns the practice of untouchability and casteism is declining though some political groups with vested interests are fomenting and encouraging the evil of casteism. Child marriage, practice of Sati, taboo on widow re-marriage are the things of past and now there is much freedom for women. The spread of education among females is leading to rapid modernization. After independence the backward classes have been guaranteed special privileges under the Constitution and this is leading to mixing up of all classes of society. Many welfare projects are under way to help the backward and down trodden sections of the society. Now due to economic exigencies the professions are no longer based on classes. Now everybody is free to adopt and pursue a profession of his choice.

The Concept of World Unity

An important characteristic of modernity is the ideal of one world or the concept of world unity. This is why modernity is valued as a liberating ideology for mankind. The idea of modernity is founded upon the belief in the basic unity of mankind. The ancient Indian traditions are not opposed to the ideal of unity of mankind; indeed they are conducive and congenial to this ideal. Therefore, progress towards world unity can be made while maintaining the basic tenets of ancient Indian philosophy. The model of modernity inherited by India is that of Great Britain; therefore, the Russian model has little impact upon India. The communists in India want that India should follow the Soviet model; but, however, their number is not very great. Indeed a true progress towards modernity can be made only by reconciling the old and new values of life. What is old is not necessarily bad or backward; nor what is modern is necessarily good and progressive.

Importance of Education

For a transition to modernity, education is the best instrument or means of such a change. The ideal of universal education has been recognized by our Constitution. As long as there is illiteracy in the country the democratic ideals cannot take firm roots in the Indian soil. Therefore, it is imperative to achieve the end of universal education soon. In order to appreciate what is desirable

and what is undesirable in the ancient tradition we need sound education. For this knowledge of Sanskrit language and literature is very essential. Modern educationists are unanimous in their view that Sanskrit language should be given a place of honour in the curriculum of our education. However, all educationists are critical of the current Western style of education and want fundamental reforms in it. Lastly, what is needed is not the outward aping of modernity by donning mod dresses or going to clubs etc., but the incorporation of democratic and scientific outlook which means respect for the point of view of others and no desire to impose or thrust one's views and opinions upon others.

Sanskritization in India

Characteristics of Varna System

The origin of caste system is traced to ancient Indian Varna system. Some of the characteristics of Varna system resemble those of caste. The important among these are :

- (1) All over India without any regional exceptions same kind of classification is to be found.
- (2) There are only four Varnas. But if we include Harijans these will be five.
- (3) The social hierarchy in the Varna system is quite explicit :
- (4) The social hierarchy of Varnas is not subject to change.

Being based upon Varna system, the caste system is to be found in the four corners of India. But, unlike Varna, there are some differences in caste system from one region to the other. For example, certain castes are to be found only in a particular region of the country such as *Bhadbhujia, Kahar, Barot and Charan* etc. Besides, the social status of various castes varies from one region to the other. In fact, many castes operate upon regional basis. Harijans are the essential part of caste system.

As remarked earlier, in the Varna system the place and status of each Varna is fixed but in practice this is not the case with the castes. Before the British rule the dispute regarding the status of castes used to be presented before feudal lords for

arbitration and they used to settle them and fix the status of the caste. Thus whereas in the Varna system the place of each Varna is fixed, it keeps changing in the case of caste. The ancient writers on Varna system fixed the rights and duties of the three upper castes, who, on account of *Upanayan* ceremony, used to be called Dvija (twice-born). Thus the duties of Varnas were fixed. The Brahmin occupied the place of supremacy. During the British rule the ideal of Varna system prevailed and each caste tried to reform itself by sanskritization.

Definition of Sanskritization

In his book *Social Change in Modern India*, M. N. Srinivas has defined the process of sanskritization thus : "Sanskritization is the process by which a 'low' Hindu caste, or tribal or other group, changes its customs, rituals, ideology and way of life in the direction of a high, and frequently, 'twice born' caste".² In this definition the following points have been stressed :

(1) By sanskritization a caste or tribal community ventures to gain higher status in society.

(2) In sanskritization a low caste takes to the conduct, customs of higher castes and reform itself by sanskritization.

(3) The process of sanskritization is found not only in castes but also in tribal communities.

(4) In sanskritization Brahmins alone are not the object of imitation. Kshatriyas and Vaishyas are also taken as models. But in all instances the lower caste moves towards the higher and therefore follows or imitates the higher caste.

(5) By Sanskritization a caste or a group adopts and follows customs and rituals which would qualify it for being treated as twice-born.

Ideals of Sanskritization

In the process of sanskritization a claim is made for higher status in the social structure and it is therefore, a vertical movement. But in sanskritization only there is improvement of status, there are no structural changes. In India, besides castes, the process of sanskritization is to be found in tribal communities like Bhils of Rajasthan, Gonds of Madhya Pradesh and other hill

tribes. By the process of sanskritization a tribal community tries to prove itself to be a part of Hindu Society. In his book on the Coorgs, Srinivas had laid undue emphasis upon the ideal of Brahminism. But in his book *Social change in Modern India*, he admits that the ideal of sanskritization can also be Kshatriya, Vaishya and even Shudra.

Vertical and Horizontal Integration

In the Varna system, the three upper castes, namely, Brahmin, Kshatriya and Vaishya are considered to be twice-born, because only members of these castes have the right of wearing the sacred thread during Upanayan ceremony. In Brahmins also there are a number of caste distinctions. As different castes are to be found in the same region, they speak the same language, celebrate the same festivals and take to worship of local deities. M. N. Srinivas has called this process as vertical integration and this is quite different from horizontal integration. Horizontal integration occurs within a single Varna. On the whole, Brahmins have tried to keep aloof from the local influences and these are found mainly among Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras. The Kshatriyas and Vaishyas in different parts of the country are separated by deep differences. The maximum sanskritization has taken place in certain Shudra castes.

The Dominant Caste

In the rural life of India, there is an agricultural caste which has the ownership of land. This is the dominant or prabhu caste. For a dominant caste the following are the essential characteristics :

- (1) The major portion of agricultural land is under its ownership.
- (2) Adequate membership of the caste.
- (3) In the local social hierarchy it must occupy the highest status.
- (4) In the presence of above features of lordship a caste will be called Prabhu or dominant.

In certain villages more than one caste enjoys the lordship of land and in the course of time the domination of one caste over the other gets reversed. In the last century various factors have influenced the lordship — Western education, government service, urban sources of income etc. After independence, on account of universal adult franchise, Harijans now feel their importance, power

and dignity. Now the reins of power have gone in the hands of rural rich and with the exception of those villages where Harijans outnumber others the seat of power is unlikely to change for some time in the rural India. A caste enjoying lordship in one village has to observe deference and respect to the caste which enjoys lordship in the whole region. Thus a local dominant caste is less powerful than the regional dominant caste. In the establishment of lordship the ownership of land plays a crucial role. The ownership of land gives not only power but prestige also. The power and prestige of feudal lords affect their relationships with other castes — for example, in Punjab feudal lords treat Brahmins as their servants and the Thakurs of Madhopur in Eastern U.P. did not accept the food prepared by Brahmins except their preceptors and priests. Though in secular matters, members of dominant caste are privileged, in matters of rituals the situation is very different. In India the sacred matters occupy more importance than the secular affairs. A millionaire Gujarati Bania dare not step into the kitchen of a Brahmin because this would pollute the Brahmin's food. If the dominant caste is Brahmin or Lingayat its ideal of Sanskritization would be Brahminism and if it is Rajput or Bania its ideal would be Kshatriya or Vaishya.

Two Tendencies of Caste System

Following two tendencies are to be clearly seen in India :

(1) Besides local religious and moral values, the existence of other cultures is recognized.

(2) The ways and manners of higher castes are followed. However it needs be remembered that the local rural organization is not entirely independent of the all-India organization. The rules of moral conduct, sanctity of the places of pilgrimage, moral norms and other sacred traditions are derived from various sources. In villages, the elders of dominant caste are the guardians of a pluralist value-system. The dominant caste maintains the structural distance between the castes under its influence. The lower castes also try to follow the customs and manners of dominant caste. The imitation of the life style of upper castes is done in a round-about manner because direct imitation of the upper castes will be frowned upon and may invite punishment.

Sanskritization in Punjab

Dr. D. R. Chanana¹ has mentioned about sanskritization in regions where prior to independence in 1947 and consequent upon partition of the state the influence of Islam and West Asian countries was dominant. Sikh religion enjoyed subsidiary lordship. In the matter of religion Hindus were deeply impressed by Islam, particularly its Sufi Cult. In pre-partition Punjab and North Western Frontier Provinces, Muslims enjoyed the lordship and in certain areas Sikhs enjoyed the subsidiary lordship. Brahmins among Hindus had neither resources nor knowledge and the commercial classes were more important. Arya Samaj and its rival Sanatan Dharma did much to spread education. This encouraged sanskritization of Hindus.

Sanskritization in Tribals

The process of sanskritization is to be found among tribals. On the other hand, Shri S.L. Kalia has tried to show that the process of tribalisation is evident among the castes of Jaunsar Bawar of U.P. and Bastar of M.P. The elders of dominant castes administer punishment to those who violate its rules. But at times, the twice-born upholders of great traditions yield to little traditions. It is of course not always true that maximum sanskritization occurs in Brahmins.

Examples of Dominant Caste

It is possible to draw a map of rural India in which the name of dominant caste in each and every village can be given, but this will be a very cumbersome task. Yet the names of dominant castes can be enumerated. In Northern India the rural folk nickname the dominant caste *Ajgar* which is indicative of dominant castes among the down-trodden castes. *Ajgar* is formed by the first letter of the names of Ahir, Jat, Gujar and Rajput. In some parts of West Bengal, Sagdip, Patidar and Rajput in Gujarat, Maratha in Maharashtra, Kamma and Reddy in Andhra, Vokkalig and Lingayats in Mysore, Wellas, Gandar, Parchayi and Kallar in Madras and Nayar, Syrians, Ijwan etc. in Kerala are the dominant castes. The dominant castes project ideals for the majority in the villages

Kshatriyas and Brahmins maintained their lordship for long. The places of pilgrimage and religious monasteries are the sources of sanskritization. The spread of sanskritization among the non-dominant castes living in the vicinity of places of pilgrimage and monasteries used to be vertical and horizontal in other regions.

Conflict of Varna Ideals

As we have mentioned earlier, there has been no single ideal of sanskritization. There were three or four such models. There has been conflict among these ideals. For example, in Vedic scriptures we find references to conflict between Kshatriyas and Brahmins. Later on there was conflict between Buddhism and Jainism. In Buddhism and Jainism we find mostly trading communities who were resentful of the over-domination of Brahmins. Buddhism and Jainism pointed a way out to get rid of disqualifications imposed by caste system.

In the original Varna system, the place and status of each varna was fixed. But during the epic period there were important changes in the life style of Brahmins. These changes are crucial because other varnas used to follow the ideals of Brahmins. In epic age the Brahmins began to be treated as sanaysins. In post-epic age Brahmins were influenced by Buddhism and Jainism. The spread of Bhakti movement gave an opportunity to the lower caste persons to become religious leaders. Many Harijans and women also attained the status of sainthood. Bhakti movement helped to spread the message of ancient scriptures which was in Sanskrit, in the regional languages.

Political Elements in Sanskritization

Before the British rule the instability of political system in India was a powerful source of social mobility. In the 18th century there were four stages of political organization — Imperial, Intermediary, Regional and Local. At the imperial level there were Mughal emperors. At the intermediary level there used to be Nababs. At the regional level the jagirdars or feudal lords dominated. The Jagirdars used to rule through local 'Aamils'. Thus at the top there was a king under whom used to be Nababs and under Nababs there were Rajas who used to control the populace through local

chieftains. The officer at the lower rung was under obligation to provide soldiers to his immediate boss. The 18th century political conditions obtaining in Gujarat and Benaras were favourable for castes like Bhoomihar, Brahmin, Rajput, Patidar and Koli. In order to give instances of social mobility before the British, M. N. Srinivas has cited, examples from U.P., Gujarat and Kerala. In all these areas there was a lot of political mobility. Due to political instability there was social mobility. A Raja had the power to raise or lower the status of castes residing in his region. This was so because in the pre-British India Rajas were considered to occupy the topmost position under the caste system. Rajas used to offer appointments to various posts from the castes. A person excommunicated from some caste for misdemeanour could approach the Raja who could grant him re-entry to the caste. The disputes regarding appointments in the castes were also adjudicated by the Rajas. The king had the authority to punish; he used to consult wise men before giving his judgment.

Economic Factors in Sanskritization

During the pre-British period the so-called mobility of the caste was not only due to political factors; there were economic considerations too. There was no dignity of labour and higher the status less the labour. The feudal lords were not supposed to do any work with their own hands. The manual labour was reserved for low castes. The ownership of land and the economic status were responsible for entitlement to high castes. During the middle ages the social mobility was linked with residential mobility. By change of residence new castes were born and they severed their links with their origins.

All the changes which have occurred in the castes are intra-caste changes and these have in no way affected the fundamentals of caste system. For this process of change, M. N. Srinivas has used the concept of sanskritization. The rationality and validity of this concept has been critically examined by Dr. D. N. Majumdar and other contemporary sociologists. The discussion of this evaluation would show the significance and limitations of this concept.

Lacuna in the Concept of Sanskritization

Sanskritization is not a new concept in the sociological literature but M. N. Srinivas has used this concept in a peculiar way. In his words, "Sanskritization means not only the adoption of new customs and habits but also exposure of new ideas and values which have found frequent expression in the vast body of Sanskrit literature, sacred as well as secular. Karma, Dharma, Papa, Punya, Maya, Samsara and Moksha are examples of some of the most common Sanskritic theological ideals and when the people become sanskritized these words occur frequently in their talk. These ideas reach the common people through sanskritic myths and stories." Thus sanskritization means the adoption of the values of a cultured society.

However, M. N. Srinivas considers this concept to be only useful but not very clear. According to him this concept helped him in analyzing the religious life of Coorgs. He believes that the anthropologists would profit by the use of this concept, though he himself concedes that "Sanskritization is no doubt an awkward term, but it was preferred to Brahmanisation for several reasons"

Process of Sanskritization

In explaining the meaning of sanskritization, M.N. Srinivas points out that sanskritization was not always due to Brahmins. Generally sanskritization qualifies a caste for a higher status. In the **dynastic system**, Sanskritization emphasizes the status of dynasty. In sanskritization sons were considered obligatory as a matter of religious duty and thus sons had a higher social status. Thus the status and value of daughters were downgraded. According to Srinivas sanskritization spread during the British rule. With the development of means of communication, the impact of sanskritization was felt in the remote corners of the country. With the spread of education and literacy it percolated to the lowest castes. The Western technology, radio, press, rail etc. greatly facilitated the process of sanskritization. The Britishers introduced the system of parliamentary democracy in the country. This also helped sanskritization. According to M. N. Srinivas the economic status of the caste is not an essential factor in the process of sanskritization though the better economic status did help. Be-

sides, the attainment of political authority, spread of education and the desire for better status also helped the process of sanskritization. Srinivas has recognized that mere sanskritization does not help a caste to attain a higher status. According to Srinivas an untouchable caste, no matter how sanskritized it becomes, will not be able to cross the barrier of untouchability. But a thoroughgoing sanskritization taking place among the castes may ultimately overhaul the Hindu caste system. A question arises if sanskritization is a one-way process. Srinivas believes it to be a two-way process.

Sanskritization not Universal

Thus, according to Srinivas, sanskritization is a process whereby a lower caste incorporates in itself the culture and values of a higher caste. This may not enable it to elevate itself to the higher caste but it does bring it nearer to it. But it must be borne in mind that under the caste system there is taboo on the lower castes against adopting the norms and values of the higher caste. According to M. N. Srinivas, "In short, it took over, as far as possible, the customs, rites and beliefs of the Brahmins, and the adoption of the Brahmanic way of life by a low caste seems to have been frequent, though theoretically forbidden". But here we encounter a difficulty. Srinivas accepts that in Hinduism the lower castes are taking to the norms and values of the higher castes. This fact may be true with reference to a particular community or region but it is not universal. As Dr. D. N. Majumdar has shown in his study of Mohana village, in U.P., there is no tendency among the lower castes to adopt the customs and manners of the higher caste nor does it help in elevating the status of any caste. There are quite a few instances where the members of low caste seem to adopt the life style of the high caste but this does not qualify them to be considered the members of the high caste. If a chamar pastes a 'Tilaka' on his forehead he would not be considered a Brahmin. Dr. D. N. Majumdar asks, "If it (sanskritization) is a process, where does the process stop and why?" In his study of the Mohana village Dr. D. N. Majumdar has shown that in the social stratification the movement among the castes is not vertical but horizontal. That is even the members of the same caste begin

to regard some of them low. For example, all Brahmins are considered highest among the castes. But among Brahmins there are sub-castes like Gaur, Kanyakubja, Saraswat etc. who consider themselves to be lower or higher than the others. This is horizontal expansion of Brahmins. Similarly, there are many sub-castes among Shudras. Not only among the Shudras, but even within the sub-castes of Shudras there are to be found further sub-castes. For a non-Chamar all chamars are at the same level but for a Chamar, another Chamar may be lower or higher to him. From the above examples it should be clear that by the change in the life style in castes there come into being further sub-castes and this change is not a vertical progress but a horizontal expansion.

Sanskritization Versus De-Sanskritization

Dr. D. N. Majumdar is not only critical of the concept of sanskritization but doubts if it is really taking place. According to him there are more signs of the reverse process, namely, de-sanskritization in evidence all over the country. In de-sanskritization the members of the higher castes abandon their dress and rituals. For example, many among the Kashmiri Pandits have abandoned their traditional mode of life. Another symptom of de-sanskritization is taking to professions traditionally reserved for the lower castes. According to D. N. Majumdar the shrinkage of distances between castes is not due to sanskritization but its reverse. The lower castes are not moving towards the higher but higher castes are abandoning their life style.

Impact of Western Culture

Western culture has facilitated the process of de-sanskritization. Under the impact of Western culture the various castes are abandoning their traditions. The educated members of all castes are adopting the Western life style and hence coming together. D. N. Majumdar admits that the process of de-sanskritization is slow in some places but it is going on everywhere. The social mobility among castes is horizontal rather than vertical. Therefore D. N. Majumdar does not consider that the concept of sanskritization is scientific. According to him, "Sanskritization connotes a group of concepts and at best is a loose one, devoid of

any special merit". He is against the use of the term Sanskritization in reference to cultural change. In particular it should not be used in reference to horizontal and vertical progress. But in the absence of a more refined concept it may be of a limited value. As long as a better concept is not formulated to explain the cultural change, the use of the terms sanskritization and de-sanskritization is indispensable. From the above examples it is evident that the changes in the life style result in the formation of new sub-castes which move horizontally. Dr. Majumdar is of the view that the process of de-sanskritization is more evident than that of sanskritization in Indian society.

Conclusion

As a matter of fact adequate study of the cultural changes in India has not been made to enable us to draw any safe and sure conclusions. But we will have to recognize that both the processes of sanskritization and de-sanskritization can be seen to operate in our society; at some places the former can be more dominant and at other places the latter. But in the absence of sufficient scientific data, it is difficult to determine conclusively which of the two is more effective. But as far as probability goes, the view of D. N. Majumdar seems more probable; though it cannot be strictly said to be true. In order to arrive at a more dependable conclusion more extensive research into this matter is called for.

Westernization in India

In the modern times westernization has played a crucial role in bringing about social change in India. Westernization means incorporation of the norms, values and cultures of the West in one's own culture. India came under the influence of westernization during the British rule. Therefore, M. N. Srinivas defines westernization thus: "I have used elsewhere the term 'Westernization' to characterize the changes brought about in Indian society and culture as a result of over 150 years of British rule, and the term subsumes changes occurring at different levels — technology, institutions, ideology, values." 5

Westernization and Urbanization

The impact of westernization is seen mostly in urban areas; but, on account of this fact, it cannot be concluded that westernization and urbanization are synonymous. In many parts of rural India more westernization is in evidence than even in the urban areas. Though on the whole more urban areas have come under the impact of westernization, nonetheless there are quite a few villages in India that are more westernized than urban areas. Therefore, it will be wrong to think that westernization is a result of urbanization. These are two independent entities or processes; that is why these have been treated separately in this book.

Westernization and Modernization

Many people are under the wrong impression that westernization is modernization because the two are thought to be the same; but in fact the two must be differentiated. Westernization is a more limited concept than modernization. All countries have not become modern due to the influence of west. For example, some countries have become modern under the influence of Japan. In modernization all those elements are included which come about by a revolution in the means of communication, more urbanization, more literacy, increase in the per capita income, adult franchise etc.

Characteristics of Westernization

In as much as modernization in India has come about due to westernization, therefore, the above mentioned changes of modernization can be taken to be the result of westernization. The following are the characteristics of westernization :

1. *Morally neutral* : Modernization is generally considered to be good, but this is not always so with westernization. Westernization has been for good as well as evil. In fact westernization is morally neutral.

2. *Limits of Westernization* : A distinction has to be drawn between westernization and western culture. All the elements of the Western Culture did not originate in the West. For example, Christianity originated in Asia. The decimal system originated in India and via Arabia reached West. Gun powder, printing press

and paper were invented in China. All these constitute the important elements of Western culture though these did not originate in the West. The manner in which westernization operates in India is mainly the result of British influence. The Culture of Germany, France, Russia, etc., is quite different from the Indian Culture.

3. *Wide, complex and multi-level concept* : The concept of westernization is quite wide. It subsumes all changes which are consequent upon Western technology and modern science. Secondly, it has had varying impact upon the different aspects of the culture; hence it is a complex concept. Thirdly, westernization has affected society on different levels. For example, in olden days people used to eat in thalis or banana leaves in squatting position but now they use dining table with all its accessories. While westernization has had very wide impact, there has been resistance to it in some quarters. Thus westernization has had variable impact on the Indian society.

4. *Conscious-unconscious process* : Westernization has not been incorporated willingly everywhere in India. At places the copying of British manners and customs was deliberate; at other places it was a subconscious process.

Consequences of Westernization

The following are the consequences of westernization.

(1) *Impact on institutions* : Westernization has influenced caste system, joint family system etc. It gave birth to new institutions like press, electoral system, Christian missionaries etc.

(2) *Transvaluation* : Westernization has encouraged modern values like humanism, egalitarianism and secularism. British Civil and Criminal law affected Hindu and Muslim laws. The system of slavery was ended and members of all castes were free to get education. Gradually, there was spread of education among women. Theoretically all were accorded equal economic opportunity. Many discriminative religious practices were ended. Among such practices, the practice of untouchability is foremost.

3. *Governmental reform* : Under the impact of Westernization the states undertook a number of reforms. Steps were taken

to prevent epidemics and famines. An effort to spread education was also made.

(4) *Re-Definition of Hinduism* : Under the impact of westernization, many religious reform movements came into existence and they attempted to re-define the various aspects of Hinduism in the light of modern science and knowledge. In re-defining Hinduism, Maharshi Dayananda, Ramakrishna Parmahansa, Vivekananda, Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, Raja Ram Mohan Roy did commendable work. They indicated the various aspects of Hinduism which required urgent reforms. By their laudable efforts Sati System where a wife was burnt alive on the funeral pyre of her husband was ended. The curse of child marriage was put to an end and widow remarriage was sanctioned. An effort to eradicate the evil of untouchability was also made.

(5) *Many political & cultural movements* : Besides religious reform movements which came into existence under the impact of westernization, many political and cultural movements were also started. Besides national movements many parochial movements based upon caste, creed, language and religion came into existence.

(6) *Spread of education* : The most significant impact of westernization is to be seen in the form of modern education taking root. During the British period, many schools, colleges and universities were opened to disseminate modern education. Press came into existence and many newspapers and periodicals were published which offered a number of view-points. An educated class came into existence which became the vanguard of freedom movement.

Carriers of Westernization

The British and Indians both helped to begin and accelerate the process of westernization. Therefore both can be considered as carriers of westernization. Among Britishers three groups can be distinguished. Firstly there were soldiers and civilians occupying high ranks. Secondly, there were traders and the owners of orchards. Thirdly, there were missionaries. All of these three groups helped to spread westernization. On the other hand many Indians also helped the process of westernization. Among them the following are included :

1. *Indians who came in direct contact with Englishmen* : The Indians who came in direct contact with the Englishmen were influenced by their life style. Among them were the persons who were in the household employment of the Englishmen and also those Hindus who abandoned Hinduism and espoused Christianity.

2. *Indirectly influenced* : The primary contribution towards westernization was made not by those who came directly in contact with Englishmen but by those who were indirectly influenced. Among these are included the persons who received new education, entered into trades or served as petty bureaucrats under the British. All were not middle-class persons. For example, Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Rabindranath Tagore belonged to aristocratic families. These English educated gentlemen brought forth great change in society by launching various movements. Among the Muslims, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan belonged to this category. Among the backward classes Dr. B.R. Ambedkar did a great job of modernization. Besides the contribution made by the above mentioned luminaries, certain castes among Hindus were especially westernized. These include Vaids of Bengal and Parsi and Bania westernized. These include Vaids of Bengal and Bania of Western India. The Parsis are also westernized.

The impact of westernization was also felt through the patients who were treated in the British hospitals, through the persons who had to go to law courts and through the medium of news papers and books. The port cities near the seacoasts were particularly vulnerable to the westernization. For example, Calcutta, Bombay and Madras were the first cities to receive the impact of westernization.

In India westernization did not take place on a whole-sale basis; rather it was selective. Westernization in India was the result of the traditional tolerant, catholic and receptive attitude of the Indians. India always has had the tradition of catholicity, tolerance and self-criticism. The luminaries like Vivekananda, Ranade, Gokhale, Tilak, Tagore, Aurobindo, Gandhi, Patel, Nehru and Radhakrishnan who came under the influence of westernization tried to re-evaluate and re-define the ancient Indian values in terms of modern enlightenment.

Influence of West on Indian Society

Regarding the impact of West on the Indian life, Humayun Kabir has observed that the incisive intellect of the West closely examined every belief and idea. This, on the one hand, led to change in the beliefs regarding physical life and, on the other hand, destroyed the very structures of beliefs and traditions. The impact of the West was felt upon caste system, education, social awakening, political awakening, joint family system, economic structure, institution of marriage, untouchability and other rituals.

The impact of West can be studied under the following heads :

(1) *Western influence upon caste system*: (a) With the coming of British in India there was a fillip to Industrialization. In the industrial factories members of all castes work together. They share their problems and aims. In order to work together they come close to each other. This helps to break down the distinction of high and low caste.

(b) *Urbanization* : As a result of industrial expansion new townships came into existence and people from the villages flocked to these townships in order to earn livelihood. In towns members of different castes come together and the sense of separateness cannot be sustained in the new environment. Thus urbanization leads to a relaxation in the caste system.

(c) *Means of transport* : Without the improvement in the means of transport the caste distinctions remained stable and fixed but with the improvement in the means of transport on account of western influence the people came together and this led to watering down of caste distinctions.

(d) *English education* : The spread of education disseminated modern values of Equality, Fraternity and Liberty. This gave a sharp blow to the caste system. Many went to England for higher studies and they came back fully westernized and critical of narrow and bigoted caste distinctions.

(e) *Influence of Western culture* : The influence of Western Culture helped to relax the ties of caste system. Under the impact of Western culture the dress and food habits of members of

different castes tended to be similar. Due to dress etc. the visible distinction between people was not that of caste but one of class. When the first medical college was set up in Calcutta the dissection of a cadaver for even educational purposes was considered to be an irreligious act; but gradually it came to be accepted as morally permissible if the purpose was education. The supply of water through pipes and eating in restaurant also helped to diminish the feeling of untouchability. Dr. Bhagwandas writes that when water pipes were fitted in Kashi, the project was opposed on the ground that members of low castes may operate the waterworks but now everyone makes use of them. When Britishers introduced the crops of tomatoes and potatoes in India people were reluctant to eat them; but now almost everyone eats biscuits, cakes and pastries without bothering about ingredients.

(2) *Western influence on untouchability*: Besides undermining the caste system, the spell of westernization also helped to eradicate the evil of untouchability. The rapid development of means of communication, urbanization and industrialization helped in the eradication of untouchability because one cannot choose his companions while travelling in buses or trains. Western education encouraged the sentiment of equality and there was also social and political awakening in the country.

(3) *Impact of West on women*.: There was a profound impact of western culture on women. Indian women re-examined their status in the light of western ideas. On account of western education they felt that they were in no way inferior to menfolk. The psychological researches have proved that there are no innate or fundamental distinctions among men and women with regard to ability and capacity and that these are all due to environmental factors. Thus women demanded an equal place with men in all walks of life. There was no moral sanction for higher education among women in India. The recitation of religious scriptures was considered enough for them. The social reformers had to struggle hard to win the right of higher education for women. First of all Calcutta University opened its gates to women. Gradually all Indian Universities allowed women to enroll themselves as students

The two significant upshots of the spread of education among women are : (1) Discarding Purdah and (2) Demand for Equality.

(4) *Impact of west on social structure* : The Indian social structure has been deeply influenced by West. The Indian social structure is based upon caste system. These castes are endogamous groups and are fixed by birth. Under the impact of West the caste system has become weak and is getting replaced by the class distinction prevalent in the West. There is also disintegration of the rural structure of our society. Industrialization and urbanization have thrown the rural social structure out of gear. Society has become more dynamic and the traditions are breaking down. In urban set-up the caste distinctions cannot be sustained. In busy bazars and factories the caste distinctions are not possible. Under the impact of West money has come to be greatly valued. Now in place of caste status, money status is the criterion of man's worth. Western education is secular; therefore the rituals are losing importance.

(5) *Westernization of the institution of marriage* : Among the institutions, the institution of marriage has received maximum impact of West. Following are the crucial changes in this respect.

(a) *Change of basis* : Now the marriage in India is not merely a sacrament but mutual love and married bliss constitutes its basis.

(b) *Ritualist change* : Alongwith the change in the basis are in evidence changes in rituals attendant on marriage. The civil marriage, though not common, is receiving gradual social acceptance.

(c) *Freedom to choose partners* : In the past the wishes of bride and bridegroom had no place in the scheme of marriage. It was an exclusive affair between parties but now boy and girl at least meet each other before marriage.

(d) *Eradication of child marriage* : On account of the influence of the West there is a spread of education among girls and now there is a general realization that child marriage is detrimental to health. Due to these reasons there is almost eradication of child marriage from Hindu Society.

(e) *Marriage at mature age* : Alongwith the eradication of child marriage there is a natural consequence of marriages occurring at mature age.

(f) *Admissibility of divorce* : According to Hindu tradition marriage is a sacrament which can come to an end only by the death of a partner. It could not be ended by divorce. Now under the influence of West divorce is available to Hindus.

(g) *Inter-caste marriage* : Under the influence of Western culture inter-caste and inter-religion marriages are now possible. In the past such an act would have been visited by the punishment of ex-communication.

(h) *Monogamy* : Under the influence of West monogamy has come to be accepted as the only natural state of marriage. According to Hindu Marriage Act 1955, no Hindu could enter into a marriage if his/her partner is alive.

(i) *Free enjoyment* : Under the influence of West there is a tendency among some educated and rich persons to avoid the complication of marriage and lead a life of free sex. The number of men and women who do not wish to marry is growing. This is possible because sex outside marriage is available.

(6) *Influence of West on family* : Alongwith the institution of marriage, the Western culture has influenced the family relations and ideals as well. In this connection the following points are worth noting.

(a) *Disintegration of joint family* : Due to Western influence everywhere the joint family is on the way to extinction. The individualism of West is breaking down the joint family. Today young persons do not want to sacrifice their privacy and pleasure at the altar of joint family.

(b) *Small family* : The Western influence has not only produced the disintegration of the family, it has also impelled people to limit their children. Now all educated persons want small families.

(c) *Impermanency of family* : Under the influence of West women are now highly educated and are unable to merge their personalities in the family. As they usually seek employment they are economically also independent. Their affection for children is no longer deep and abiding. Therefore, they seek divorce easily. On account of these factors the basis of family is no longer permanent.

(7) *Influence of Western culture on Indian culture* : The

influence of Western Culture can be seen on language, literature music, art, religion and morality as follows :

(a) *Language* : West has deeply influenced the Indian languages. The English words used in Indian languages outnumber the words of all other foreign languages. Indeed without the fund of English words the vocabulary of Indian languages is incomplete. All mechanical devices and instruments used in daily life in India are gift of the West. Most of them have English names, without the use of which we cannot communicate easily.

(b) *Literature* : The Indian literature has been deeply influenced by the Western literature. The romanticism, existentialism and psycho-analysis have so much influenced the Indian literature that most of the Indian stories and dramas are written under their impact. The free verse of West is now to be found in India. Under the Western influence, short story and one act dramas have become common in Indian literature. Besides, we can see the influence of ideologies of atheism, secularism, communism, self-inulgence, personal freedom and humanism in Indian writings.

(c) *Art* : Like language and literature, art has come under the impact of western culture. In Indian cinema the use of western dance and music is quite common. Musical instruments like violin have influenced Indian music. Modern art is very much a foreign import.

(d) *Religion* : Indian religion has also been influenced by the Western culture. Due to intellectualism of West, the religious faith of many an Indian has been shaken. They have cast off many superstitions. The ritualism is losing its hold and sanctity. Religion is becoming philosophical, mechanical or commercial. Many educated persons have lost touch with the religious scriptures and believe them to be antiquated on account of their secular training. They are not prepared to take them seriously.

The influence of West on the Indian society and culture is rapidly increasing. Many persons are so dazzled by the Western Culture that they mock their own culture and traditions. The leadership of independent India rightly wants to encourage the Indian culture. This is a laudable step. But as we should not be blind worshippers of the West, we should not at the same time worship

Indian culture blindly. There should be a synthesis of the two.

Difference of East & West

Rudyard Kipling's rhyme that "East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet" is nothing but an expression of an Englishman's pride in the glory of his culture. No doubt West is very advanced and East is backward, but as Japan has shown, there is nothing inherent or inevitable about it. Moreover, the world today is shrinking so fast, no doubt due to Western science and technology that it will be difficult to treat East and West as two cultures in the not too distant future. But, however, there are certain differences in the two cultures :

- (1) Whereas West is materialist, East is spiritually inclined.
- (2) Whereas West is progressive and forward looking, fatalism is still embedded in the thinking of the East.
- (3) West is much more advanced technologically than the East.
- (4) Whereas the parliamentary institutions are part and parcel of the West, these institutions are still weak in the East.

The foregoing statements may lead one to believe that there are fundamental differences in the East and West and that there is no meeting ground between the two. But the Oriental and Occidental scholars have dismissed any fundamental incompatibility in the two cultures. Though traditionally East is considered spiritualist and the West materialist it is difficult to come by proofs in favour of this argument. From the scientific viewpoint East is definitely backward but in the medieval ages the East was more advanced.

Democracy in East

Dr. Kashi Prasad Jaiswal and other scholars have established after their historical researches that till 4th century B.C. there were democratic states in India. In Buddhist literature are mentioned ten democratic states in the East Bihar. Till the invasion of Alexander, there were a number of democratic polities in Punjab. At that time a vote was known as Chhand and the Returning officer was known as Shalaka Grahak. The decisions were made democratically. In order to settle disputes there were select committees.

Progressivism of East

Though the progress may be slow in East, nonetheless East is

progressive. How progressive East can be is clear from the example of Japan. Till 1870, Japan was a backward country, but within the short span of 35 years, it went ahead of Russia. In comparison with Japan the world industry became backward. Japan was ahead of many western countries. Even today Japan is ahead of the whole world in certain respects. India also cannot be regarded non-progressive. After independence India has made much headway in science, technology and industry.

Synthesis of Western Materialism and Indian Spirituality

The difference between East and West is gradually diminishing; but there are certain basic differences between East and West and these would not be bridged in the near future. The West has said good bye to spiritual values in its zeal for materialism. Dr. Radhakrishnan writes in his *Spirit of Man* that the world we are inhabiting today is the world of self-centred people who are going through a barbaric civilization, a product of intense craze for material comforts. The famous historian Oswald Spengler forecasts doom of West. The same view is echoed by Toynbee. Bertrand Russell and P.A. Sorokin are also critical of Western culture and advocate the values of altruism, a fact deeply realized in East since ages.

India is a religious country in which the spiritual values dominate. Liberation from this world is considered to be the goal and summum bonum of human life.

The rishis of Upanishads spent their lives in the search of self-knowledge. Vedic seers saw divine power behind every phenomenon. According to Gita, the realisation of God is the highest aim of human life. According to Lord Buddha life is sorrow and misery and to get rid of this sorrow and misery is the aim of life. According to Shankara Absolute alone is real and the world is a myth. The mayayada of Shankara has permeated every nook and corner of Indian life. With the exception of Charvakas all systems of Indian philosophy are wedded to spirituality and disregard this world. An Indian is interested in immortality, not in living the life.

Indian Neglect of Materialism

The Indian spiritualism has become one-sided on account of its

neglect of material values. This encouraged escapism. Buddhism gave birth to philosophy of sorrow and misery and this did incalculable harm to Indian life. The bliss of union with God was considered the only worthy goal of humans and enjoyment of the worldly pleasures was considered to be animalistic. No attempt was made to ameliorate the miseries of this world. The philosophy of Charvakas was always a butt of mockery and joke. The neglect of women, child marriage, untouchability and other evils were the results of neglect of society by Indian thinkers. After observing the self smugness of Indians wallowing in social rottenness Vivekananda declared that India needs to say good bye to Vedanta. A young man will be better occupied playing football than reading Gita.

Gift of Western Materialism

No doubt western materialism suffers from certain defects. There is atheism, self-indulgence, race for power and an unending struggle for self-aggrandisement. According to Rabindranath Tagore Europe has speed but no direction. It is rich in means but poor in ends. The true goal of life can be had only in Indian Spirituality; there may be ecstasy of activity but no peace anywhere else. But the gift of Western materialism is equally precious. The heaven dreamt of by religion is technically possible upon this earth.

Need of Synthesis

As we have seen above neither pure materialism nor pure spiritualism are satisfactory. What we need is a synthesis. Today all the institutions of the East including language, literature, marriage, family and life style in general have come under the impact of western culture. There is need to be on our guard in this matter. If we allow ourselves to be fully westernized we will inherit many dangerous defects of the western culture. It is necessary that each culture must maintain its individuality and uniqueness. We must adopt an integral approach to life. According to integral view of life there is no inherent contradiction between materialism and spiritualism. Indeed both are complementary to each other. One is not complete without the other.

Secularisation in India

If we observe the lives of labourers in the factory, the clerks in

offices, shopkeepers, medicos, lawyers etc. in modern India, we shall find that though India is considered to be a religion dominated land, there is little religion in the day-to-day activities of an average Indian. The lives of most of the educated Indians are governed not by any religious consideration but by scientific facts and utilitarianism. Even their adherence to some old traditions is due not to religion but to some practical utility which they are able to find in it. They would justify their adherence to tradition not by religious authority but by its being useful to the society. Not only the educated but even the unlettered now show less respect for religion. Though the secularization of life is more in evidence in the urban areas and among the educationally more advanced persons, the winds of secularism are now blowing all over freely and the religious bigotry is on the retreat everywhere.

In India secularization is more in evidence among Hindus than among the persons of other religions. There is much less secularization among Jains, Sikhs and Muslims. They follow the religious traditions more strictly than the Hindus.

Definition of Secularization

Defining secularization, Dr. M. N. Srinivas writes, "The term 'secularization' implies that what was previously regarded as religious is now ceasing to be such, and it also implies a process of differentiation which results in the various aspects of society, economic, political, legal and moral, becoming increasingly discrete in relation to each other."⁶ Thus the process of secularization is anti-religious. In other words, as secularization increases religion loses hold. As we have mentioned earlier, in India secularization is fast progressing, particularly among Hindus, better-educated and urban classes. Briefly, following are its characteristics.

(1) *Decline of religion* : More secularization, less religion, this is a universal social law. Wherever the forces of secularism are strong, the forces of religion lose hold and become weakened. Among Hindus, in various walks of life, the importance of religion is nominal; and the course of things is decided by reason and pragmatism.

(2) *Process of differentiation* : The increase of secularism leads

to an increase in the differentiation of various aspects of society. Thus in modern times an educated Hindu considers the economic, the political, the legal and moral issues separately and does not allow their mixing up as this unnecessarily confuses the issues. The matters pertaining to law cannot be decided on moral basis and the economic issues cannot be resolved politically. Therefore, with secularization, clubbing of diverse issues together ceases as is the case with the religious interpretation.

(3) *Reasonableness* : An outstanding feature of secularization is the rule of reason and discarding of superstition. A secular man considers every issue on the bar of reason and is not swayed by the authority of religious scriptures. The personal life of a secular man is guided by reason and intelligence. He is critical of accepting anything on faith and therefore analytically examines each and every issue.

(4) *Scientific attitude* : The adoption of scientific attitude towards life is an important characteristic of secularism. According to Freud as the influence of science grows on man, the influence of religion declines. The expansion of modern education also reinforces the values of secularism and militates against religion.

Changes due to Secularization

The above discussion makes clear the nature of secularism. The process of secularization started with the advent of British rule but it got accelerated with industrialization and urbanization. Before going into causes of secularization it will be well worth to examine how it has affected the various aspects of life.

The areas most affected by secularization are caste system, family and rural community. A brief study of these influences in these areas will be made below :

(1) *The Impact of Secularization on Caste system* — *The distinction of Pure and Impure* : In Indian society the influence of Hindu religion is to be seen in distinction of pure and impure. From the religious point of view many actions are regarded as impure, in particular if a high caste person does actions reserved for the low castes he will get tainted by impurity. For example, the activities reserved for the Shudras, if done by the high caste

person, he will become impure. The sentiment of untouchability is linked with this feeling of impurity. The high caste individual was not supposed to have any truck with the low caste or an untouchable, even the shadow of an untouchable was sufficient to soil him. A food touched by the low caste is not eaten by the high caste, because it is considered to have become impure and unfit for consumption by the high caste. The removal of night soil, scavenging etc. are considered to be impure actions. On a number of occasions woman was considered impure. For example, woman is considered impure while menstruating and the food cooked by her was considered impure.

Under the impact of industrialization there is great change in Hindu society regarding purity and impurity. In the past the high caste person would rather starve than take to the profession of low caste; but now even Brahmins sell shoes. Now-a-days a menstruating woman freely moves everywhere and does all household duties. She is no longer considered impure, requiring quarantine. Now-a-days the feeling of untouchability is declining. A Brahmin and chamar in leather trade share not only business but also eat together. The English educated youngmen are averse to considering anything pure or impure merely because of religious sanction. Now, on account of enlightenment, the criterion of pure and impure is not religious scripture but the rules of hygiene. A number of traditional actions are still considered valid and adhered to; but this adherence is not on account of religion but the principles of good health and hygiene. Thus, now the distinction between pure and impure is no longer based on religion, its basis has become secular.

(2) *Change in Samskaras* : Samskara is a chief characteristic of Hindu society. For different Castes, different types of samskaras are essential on different occasions. For example without the Upanayan samskara no Brahmin could be considered twice-born. In ancient times Upanayan Samskara was ceremonized sometime after the child went to the school. For Hindus there are numerous samskaras for all life, the chief among these are *Garbhadhan* (conception), *Punshan*, *Jatkarma*, *Namakaran*, (Baptization), *Upanayan*, *Samavartan*

marriage and funeral. For all of these there are prescribed elaborate rituals. Now under the impact of secularization there is great change in the performance of these samskaras. For example, the samskaras like *Garbhadhan*, *Punsawan*, *Jatakarma* are now almost extinct. Now, no educated Hindu performs them. Now the first Samskara still prevalent is *Namakaran* and this too has lost its religious significance and has now become an occasion of social get-together in which people collect for feasting and expressing happiness over the birth of a child. Even now there is a priest to solemnize the samskaras but now people pay less attention to him than to plates filled with dainties. The *Upanayan* samskara is now linked with marriage. Majority of persons prefer to don the sacred thread a few days before the marriage. Maximum change of rituals has taken place in the case of marriage. Now only going round the fire and *Kanyadana* are held as necessary. Even these are done in minimum time. Thus secularization has taken the religious colour out of samskaras.

(3) *Secularization in family* : Family and marriage are the primary institutions. The impact of secularisation on marriage has already been discussed. The provision of divorce and civil contract have greatly secularized the institution of marriage. In family also the impact of secularization is to be felt most in the day to day activities of the persons. In Hinduism the day to day life of various castes is fixed. For Brahmins worship, scriptural reading and *yajna* etc. are the must. But consequent upon secularization very few Brahmin families today stick to this routine. Secularization has revolutionized the kitchen and the distinction of pure and impure is now virtually non-existent. In matters of food also there is little religion now. The festivals are still celebrated but now they have become more a social affair than religious. Now people celebrate *Holi*, *Diwali* etc., not so much for their religious significance as for their entertainment value. Some festivals are now celebrated on larger scale but this is not due to any realization of their religious significance. Rather there are psychological causes for it. Now more people are going to places of pilgrimage but the main reason is not earning of merit as sightseeing and whiling

away time. Now people going to religious places on high altitudes and to places not easily accessible are not strictly motivated by the religious spirit. There is more sense of adventure and a curiosity to know our country which again is the result of our education. Now the respect for Sadhus and mendicants among householders is much less. In urban areas the place of religion in family is now becoming extinct.

(4) *Secularization in rural India* : In the urban areas the impact of secularization is quite obvious, but the rural India also is not immune to this influence. In villages the effectiveness of Panchayats is declining, and wherever there are Panchayats these are now organized on political rather than religious basis. In the rural India also, now a person is not respected so much for his religion as for his money. That is why in the rural India a money-lender is more respected than a Brahmin. If a member of a low caste has more money he is more respected than a poor high caste. The influence of religion in the family system in the villages is also declining. The changes parallel to those in the urban families have occurred in the rural families also. Even then the secularization in rural India is on a lesser scale than in the cities. Though inter-caste marriages are rare in the village some stray cases can be seen. In Panchayats now the problems are discussed from the socio-political angle rather than religious. The festivals have turned into social occasions. In villages the persons of all castes can be seen to be engaged in the profession of agriculture and cattle-breeding.

Causes of Secularization

Following are some of important reasons of secularization :

(i) *Modern education* : The most important reason of secularization is the modern education which came to India with the British. With the knowledge of English, science and modern socio-political thinking, the thinking of people inclined towards secularism. The educated intelligentsia abandoned all the superstitions and false beliefs and put the entire tradition to critical analysis and accepted those parts of the tradition which can stand the test of reason. With the co-education the tendency to inter-caste marriage received a fillip. The educated person is more pragmatic and utilitarian in

his thinking and ideas and this encourages secularism. The members of different castes met in the educational institutions and this helped to discourage untouchability and caste feelings.

(2) *Development of means of transport & communication* : The development of the means of transport and communication has helped a lot the process of secularisation. The train, bus and taxi have helped people to come together easily and frequently. This has encouraged catholicity of outlook. This gave a blow to caste-system and helped to reduce the feeling of untouchability. The development of means of transport and communication helped the villagers to come to towns and take the message of liberalism back to their homes. •

(3) *Social & religious reform movement* : During the British rule, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, Keshab Chandra Sen, Mahadev Govind Ranade, M. K. Gandhi, Swami Dayanand etc. led a number of social and religious reform movements which greatly encouraged rational and critical thinking. Naturally, this helped the movement of secularism.

(4) *Legal reforms* : In modern times Hindu Code Bill greatly modernized and secularized the Hindu society. The various laws enable women to seek divorce, and receive alimony. Property succession provisions, adoption provisions etc. have helped to liberate and emancipate women. This has made the marriage and family a non-permanent affair. The 1955 Untouchability Eradication Act gave a blow to untouchability and the distinction of pure and impure. In modern times all adults are equal before law. Besides the constitutional provision of equality before law, Indian Constitution declares India to be a secular democratic republic. All this has, of course, encouraged secular forces in India.

(5) *Contribution of political organizations* : Some political organizations like D.M.K. have directly attacked the Hindu Society and thus encouraged secularism. On the other hand, pro-Hindu organizations like R.S.S. and Hindu Mahasabha also helped secularization by calling for reform in the Hindu society.

(6) *Urbanization* : In cities the separateness of caste is impossible. This indirectly encouraged secularism.

(7) *Lack of Hindu organization* : From the religious viewpoint, the Christian, the Muslim, the Jain and Sikh are more organized than the Hindus. In Hinduism there are more sects than in any other religion. Though these sects are nominally Hindu there is little common among them. Therefore, the sectarian organizations are not helpful to Hinduism as a whole. There are many Hindus who are so only in name, and believe almost nothing of Hinduism. Hinduism is indeed so catholic a religion that anybody, believing in any God and having any life style, may be considered Hindu. On account of this loose organization the influence of Hinduism today is waning. Because of its loose character and organization Hindus are not strict about their religious duties and performances. Because of this Hinduism is more vulnerable to secularization than any other religion.

(8) *Secularization of Indian culture* : Though the Indian Culture is known as being religion dominated, it is becoming progressively secularized. In this process of secularization, modern education, cinema, radio, newspaper etc. are important factors. In modern times the foundation of many cultural beliefs is found in secular matters rather than religious. In this way in the spheres of literature, art, music etc. the influence of religions is declining and the influence of democratic, rational and scientific thinking is increasing. India, being a secular country, its publicity department tries to spread the message of secularism.

(9) *Secularization of professions* : In ancient India the choice of profession was made on the basis of religion. The religious scriptures had fixed the professions of different castes. Now the members of modern generation do not consider it obligatory to choose their professions on the basis of religion but are guided by practical and pragmatic considerations in this respect.

(10) *Lack of political support* : In ancient times Hindu Kings used to support the Hindu religion and this helped it to maintain itself. In the British times also the states like Travancore-Cochin, Mysore, Baroda, Jaipur, Jammu & Kashmir, where Hindu Rajas were ruling were citadels of Hindu Dharma because these kings were supporting the Hindu Dharma. After the independence when the

states merged into federal India the support to Hindu Dharma came to an end. Now-a-days Nepal is the only country where Hinduism is receiving royal patronage. Of course the overwhelming majority of Hindus live in India. The withdrawal of government support has dealt a blow to spread and maintenance of Hinduism. As the Hindu institutions are denied the financial help from the government they have become weak and non-viable. Even the property of Maths is coming under state control. On account of decline in the prestige, power and influence of monasteries the heads of these monasteries have begun taking interest in politics. All this has given fillip to the process of secularization.

The above discussion of the process of secularization makes it clear that in the near future there is no possibility of this process slowing down. In the recent past an organization entitled 'Vishva Hindu Parishad' is trying to consolidate the Hindu interests at an international level. The efforts of this organization may help Hindus to organize politically; but it is not expected that this will halt the process of secularization. Indeed the spread of secularization is due to the reason that in order to be a Hindu it is not obligatory to perform any rituals and carry out any religious observances. For example, a Hindu may or may not go to a temple, observe fast on a particular day etc. A Hindu is left to his own discretion to chalk out his way of life. This liberalism has certainly encouraged secularism. If the spirit of revivalism overtakes Hinduism and under its influence a certain minimum code of conduct becomes obligatory for every Hindu, the process of secularization may slow down but it cannot be altogether halted. Indeed except Hindus the followers of all other religions are under obligations to follow certain rules of conduct and perform certain religious observances. For example, a Mohammadan must have innate faith in the prophethood of Mohammad and the unity of God and besides perform 'namaz' five times a day. That is why the process of secularization is slow among Muslims. If Hinduism wants to maintain its separate entity it must make it obligatory upon its adherents to compulsorily perform certain actions. This would, on the one hand, encourage a sense of unity among Hindus and, on the other, distinguish it from other religions.

*Modernization in India**Definition of Modernization*

Before undertaking the discussion of modernization in India, it is advisable to define the term modernization first. According to S. N. Eisenstadt, "Historically, modernization is the process of change towards those types of social, economic and political systems that have developed in Western Europe and North America from the seventeenth century to the nineteenth and have spread to other European countries and in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to the south American, Asian and African continents."⁷ Modernization is the characteristic feature of modern society.

Characteristics of Modernization

The process of modernization becomes evident from its characteristics. Following are its characteristics :

(1) *Social Mobilisation* : The social mobilization is that process by which the old social, economic and psychological elements are transformed and new social values of human conduct are set up. The social mobilization is a peculiarity of modernization.

(2) *Social Differentiation* : Another feature of modernization is social differentiation. In this process there is increase in the complexity in social, political and economic activities and there is progress in the activities of individuals in various fields. Industrialization is a result of modernization. In politics the administrative complexity in the centre and local bodies is a characteristic of modernization. The political power gets dispersed among adults. Thus modernization is a way to democratization. As a result of modernization new trends in philosophy, religion, science and literature become visible. Briefly, an increase in modernization leads to an increase in social, economic, political and cultural fields. there is more differentiation in these.

(3) *Structural Differentiation and Change* : Another characteristic of modernization is structural differentiation and continuous change. In the social and economic fields old organizations break up yielding place to new. In politics new political parties emerge. The cottage industries are replaced by big industries. The new

means of production develop. Many new professions develop. The production becomes more complex.

(4) *Change in organizational and status system* : A feature of modern society is the emergence of a number of specialized organizations. Secondly, there is greater division of labour. Thirdly, the organizations based on close kinship lose in importance. With the acceleration in the speed of change the status of individuals and families undergoes change. New classes emerge in society. From the cultural and economic viewpoint there came into being three classes, namely, upper, middle and lower.

(5) *Urbanization* : The phenomenon of urbanization and modernization are inter-linked, one leads to the other.

(6) *Social and political movements* : An important feature of modernization is the emergence of new social and political movements which aim at the transformation of society. This transformation becomes imperative in order to make man adjust to fast changing conditions. These movements also aim at casting off orthodoxy and paving the ground for change to modernity. In order to attain the new aims, a change of outlook becomes imperative.

(7) *Comprehensive & multi-sided education* : An important aim of modernization is the spread of education. In modern society it is tried that all should be educated. Besides academic education under modernization, the need for technical and professional education becomes deep; therefore, many technical and professional institutes spring up to meet this demand.

(8) *Development of international cooperation* : Lastly, the development of international cooperation is the aim of modernization. The national movements gave birth to many nations. For the development of mutual relations among nations, League of Nations and later U.N.O. came into existence.

Modernization in India

After discussing the characteristics of modernization in India, the impact of modernization will now be discussed :

(1) *Industrialization* : In modern India the industrialization is going on at a fast pace. The Western model is being followed in

this regard. The Western Countries, in particular U.S.A., have helped India in industrialization. This has helped to bring India close to the Western style of industrialization. In order to meet the demands of fast growing population, every country must per force become industrialized. Therefore, India is fully resolved to bring about fast industrialization.

(2) *Urbanization* : The fast growing of population of this country in the last 50 years has led to fast urbanization in India. The fast industrialization and consequent urbanization has led to many ticklish problems like slums, crimes etc. In order to solve these problems town-planning is imperative.

(3) *Secularization* : Secularization is a consequence of urbanization. The people of India have adopted the ideal of secularism according to which every body is free to follow the religion of his choice. The modern society is pluralist. Compassion and tolerance are the chief characteristics of modernization.

(4) *Rise of new social classes* : The traditional social classification in India is based upon caste system. The caste system is incompatible with the egalitarian social values. Under it the status of a person is determined by his birth. Whatever may have been the merit and use of caste system in the past, there is little doubt that in the modern society it is an obstructive force ; it is retrograde ; it is against the democratic values. Due to current politicization the importance of caste system is growing ; but from all other viewpoints its value and importance is declining. Today, both in the towns and villages, the people are divided into classes which are based upon economic and political considerations rather than caste considerations. The distinction between upper, middle and lower classes are exclusively economic. The classes based on economic considerations are non-hereditary. A low class person, by the dint of his labour and application, may belong to upper class tomorrow. The importance of money and possessions in modern society is paramount. With increasing politicization there is now clear-cut demarcation between those in power and those out of it. Mostly, economically better off persons are politically also better off ; but this is not essential. The political class in India is other than the economically rich but the econo

financially rich support politicians with money and use them.

The industrialization is giving rise to an organized labour class and the communist thinking is creeping in Indian society. With the organization of labour class the capitalist class is also getting organized and they have formed many associations to protect their interest. While there are all India labour organizations there are also all India level associations of the capitalists.

(5) *Social Change* : Modernization accelerates the pace of change; it is quickened. The change is both the characteristic and goal of social change. Change is a cultural goal towards which every society advances. The change must be towards the achievement of greater human dignity and greater social equality. It is a progress towards democratic values. The social change can be seen in diverse fields. On the one hand, social movements have greatly changed our ideas and concepts about various social matters and on the other youth movements have brought about revolutionary change in the thinking and aspirations of youth. The youth movements can be seen all over the world. This is an important characteristic of modernization and the pace of modernization gets accelerated by these movements. The youth movement is a rebellion against the traditional values and is a harbinger of new shape of things to come. Today, particular attention is being paid to encourage youth movements at the University level. From time to time youth functions and festivals are held in the universities in which young persons from all over the country participate. This encourages the national integration and also shows the basis for the building up of the future. In India the youth movements can be seen in the form of student movements. The youth is demanding a right to participate in the administrative affairs of the Universities. The modern youth is busy evaluating the educational curriculum and also the efficacy and utility of examinations. These matters become bone of contention among the students and university authorities.

(6) *Westernization* : The trend towards modernization in India can be seen in the form of a movement towards westernization of the society. The trend towards westernization can be seen in all fields

In social, economic, political, cultural, religious and educational spheres India is following the example of West. Even those who are in favour of retaining the traditional values also want to utilize the good points of the western system. They want a synthesis of western and Indian values. The westernization leads to modernization because the model of modern society is provided by the West. In the social sphere we are following West in matters like dress, life style and town-planning etc. The latest fashions of the West are quickly followed by the Indian elite. There is more of westernization in the technical and scientific spheres than in the social spheres. This has given rise to cultural lag. In the social fields we are still sticking to the obscurantist values of casteism, communalism and parochialism.

(7) *Democratization* : In the field of politics the most characteristic feature of modernization is the process of democratization. India is becoming progressively democratized. There is in India universal adult franchise. Every body above a certain age is entitled to elect his representative. Every body is equal before law and enjoys equal rights and privileges. In the economic sphere an attempt is being made to reduce economic disparities. The compulsory primary education is aiming at universal literacy. All political parties are wedded to the triune values of equality, liberty and freedom. There may be differing view points regarding the means to attain these values but there is no dispute about their validity and acceptance as the ultimate goals of political endeavour. Though it is definite that there was a tradition of democracy in the ancient India, but the modern democratic tradition in India is following the West. In the promotion of democracy in the West U.S.A. in particular, has helped a great deal.

Problems of Modernization

Modernization, obviously, entails social change. As a consequence of this change, the new organizations are supplanting the old, new groups and new trends are emerging. While this leads to progress in various fields, it also gives rise to many problems. The social change promotes social disintegration. There is class war and counter-revolutionary movements come into being. In India

as a consequence of modernization, there is individual and family disintegration. The joint family system is breaking down and it is being replaced by nuclear families. Due to modern tendencies the basis of marriage has ceased to be religious; it is now a social and psychological bond. The incidence of divorce is increasing. The ideas about propriety in sexual relations are also undergoing change. As the opportunities of get together between sexes are increasing there are many instances of violation of traditional ethical values. The unemployment problem is also a result of modernization. While on the one hand there come into existence new industries, the traditional trades become obsolete. This throws many persons out of employment. There is also the problem of adequate use of leisure. In the field of politics warring political factions have come into being. There are rightists and leftists. Both have very dissimilar attitude towards problems. This renders cooperation among people difficult.

In order to resolve the problems arising out of modernization a change in social policy is needed. Modernization requires transformation. This transformation is towards progressive democratic, social and scientific ideals. In order to effect this transformation we require not only structural changes but also functional changes. The most important requirement is to promote the ideals of mutual tolerance, respect and equality, only then there will be all round progress. The modernization and social transformation should be so effected that the ancient values and contemporary needs should be properly integrated. The new values should fit into proper historical perspective. If the conflict of tradition and modernity is not intelligently resolved there can be no progress. In line with this general outlook the contemporary problems should be deeply studied and resolved. Proper leadership is required for the successful tackling of the problems but the choice of proper leadership is in the hands of every citizen.

Emergent Elite & Nationalism in India

A nation may be defined as a human group, occupying a country

with definite boundaries, sharing common traditions, aspirations and bound by common sentiments. It should possess aims and goals which bind up the community by a unifying thread. Among the constituent elements of nation the sentiment of nationalism is the most important. The sentiment of nationalism is a communal feeling that binds a group into a homogenous whole. The sentiment of nationalism received maximum fillip during the British rule. Here the various aspects of nationalism will be studied from a sociological viewpoint. In the development of nationalism the elite has to play a crucial role. The spread of English education has given rise to an educated group which is fully conscious of the value of freedom and has drawn inspiration from the West. By the study of Western history the Indians became aware of the value of nationalism. This is of course not to suggest that the glory of Indian history did not inspire the Indian elite. But the current wave of nationalism is the product of English education.

Rise of Indian Nationalism

The Indian nationalism is a fact of modern history. The interaction of a number of subjective and objective forces during the British rule and the pressure of numerous international forces were responsible for the rise of nationalism in India. The study of nationalism is important from many viewpoints. The rise of nationalism in India has been very complex and many sided. Before the onset of British rule the social structure of Indian society was unique. It was very different from the situation and socio-economic structure prevalent in pre-medieval European society. India is a multi-lingual, multi-religious society of teeming millions. From the social point of view, the Hindu society which forms the largest chunk of Indian society has been divided into numerous castes and subcastes. In itself the Hindu religion is not a homogeneous entity, having a particular set of rituals and a uniform method of worship. Indeed Hindu religion is very heterogeneous comprising of diverse forms of worship and rituals. Thus Hindu society is divided into many social and religious segments. On account of vast social, economic and political structures the growth of nationalism was slow; but though India is a vastly diverse country there is a funda-

mental thread of unity underlying the whole fabric of diversities. An important feature of Indian nationalism is that by and large it is a product of British rule. The British made long ranging changes in the Indian economic structure, developed a strong centre, introduced modern education and means of communication, in order to subserve their interest. This led to the emergence of an elite which promoted Indian nationalism and new social forces came into existence and these gave challenge to the British imperialism. Thus the social background of the development of Indian nationalism is complex and multi-sided.

Pre-British Social Background

In order to understand the Indian nationalism it is necessary to understand its social background. Before the arrival of British there were self-reliant rural communes in India. They were small democratic units which were self-sufficient. Thus the Indian feudalism was quite different from the European feudalism. Before the British rule the Indian rural society was based upon agriculture and cottage industry. It was so far centuries. The Indian agriculture also was quite backward from the technical viewpoint. In the social realm, family, caste panchayat and rural panchayat exercised social control. In the urban areas, some cities were important from religious, some from commercial and others from political viewpoint. The capitals of various states were cities. In cities there were cottage industries. These industries were helped by the government. There was little cultural exchange between various cities because the means of communication were poor. Therefore, the political upheavals made little impact upon rural India. Because of lack of communication among persons living in different regions the national spirit could not develop. The only sense of unity among the Indian people was religious and ideological. In order to go on pilgrimage people used to visit the four corners of India. The rural India, however, remained untouched by the political and social changes. The Indian culture has primarily been religious. The economic and political values did not occupy the place and importance which they do in the modern culture. The unity of Indian culture is religious and spiritual, it lacks the spirit of nationalism.

Change in Agriculture System

Consequent upon the British rule there were wide ranging changes in India. The reason of the establishment of British supremacy was the decline of Mughal empire and division of the country into small units. The pre-British administrative machinery was quite different from the post-British administrative machinery. Compared to Indian people the sentiment of nationalism, discipline, cooperation and patriotism are found in much more intense form in the English people. These qualities of the British impressed the Indian elite and they tried to imbibe them. The British rule has had far-reaching consequences on the Indian economic system. This gave a blow to the Asian values and helped to establish a Westernized society. This led to political unification. This in turn gave rise to national movement. It also helped to bring about a fundamental change in the agriculture. During the British rule the land ceased to be the communal property; it became the property of the individuals. Thus in certain parts the landlords and in the others tillers became the owners of the land. During the viceroyalty of Lord Cornwallis a tribe of landlords came into existence in Bihar and Orrissa. This led to far reaching changes in the rural economy. By the *ryotwari* system the tillers were granted ownership rights. In 1820, Sir Thomas, the governor of Madras, started the system of *ryotwari*. This produced wide ranging social, cultural and economic impact. The landlord and the tiller began paying the revenue direct to government. Agriculture became a trade and the traditional rural society underwent disintegration. The fragmentation of land holdings had adverse impact upon economy. This led to impoverishment and economy was shattered. The rural indebtedness increased. The tillers were forced to part with their holdings. The tillers became farm labourers.

Spread of Education

The British spread the education in English in order to recruit volunteers for their administration. In the pre-British days the education was given in Pathashalas and Madarsas. The Christians helped to spread modern education. Their main aim was to swell the number of Christians; but this helped the process of seculariza

tion and democratization. The British not only encouraged academic education but also opened many institutes for technical education and professional training. The Western education helped the emergence of an elite class which drew attention to national problems. This class fully appreciated the value of education. The notables among those who concentrated their attention on the problems of education were Maganbhai Karamachand, D.K. Karve, B.G. Tilak, G.K. Gokhale, M.M. Malaviya and M.K. Gandhi. The Brahmo Samaj, Arya Samaj, Ram Krishna Mission and Aligarh movement helped the progress of education. Banaras Hindu University and Aligarh Muslim University came into being. The D.A.V. Colleges sprang up all over the country. The spread of education threw up two types of people — one who were Indians by birth only but were English in all respects and the other who were educated in the Western style but were equally proud of the past tradition. The persons proud of Indian past and tradition made a beginning of nationalist movement. Whatever may be said against the English education, it must be conceded that without English education there could have been no nationalist movement. But Indian nationalism is not a product of English education alone, it was a reaction against British imperialism and exploitation of Indians by foreigners. The modern education did of course help in this process.

Impact of English Education

The English education helped to spread the cultural values like democracy and national scientific thinking. On reading English literature, the educated Indians began to dislike the reactionary institutions and revolted against them. The knowledge of world culture helped to broaden the thinking and outlook of Indians. Under the influence of English education Indians reviewed their past and critically evaluated the merits and demerits of their ancient heritage. A critical evaluation of the traditions showed that the laws of development were universal and operated uniformly all over. The changed political and economic atmosphere threw up the problems in a new light for the elite. The economists like M.G. Ranade, G.K. Gokhale and K.T. Shah reviewed the Indian economy. They discovered that the economic problems of India could not be

resolved by the theories of Chanakya but by the theories of Adam Smith, Ricardo or Karl Marx. The educated persons having benefited by the scientific ideas tried to disseminate them among the masses. The Western literature was translated into Indian languages. Thus outstanding literature on science, art, culture and politics became available in the Indian languages. Besides translations, Indians wrote original works on these subjects. Both translation and original literature helped people to become well versed with modern ideas. The English language became a link language and it brought the intellectuals from all over the country on one platform. This helped the formation of many all India level societies. The fact that the English language helped in the rise of national movement can be gauged from this very fact that all the leaders of these movements were English knowing persons.

Rise of Modern Indian Elite

The concept of elite generally covers the intellectuals, but the intellectuals alone do not constitute the elite. Among the elite are also included the upper classes, the persons who either financially or socially or both ways occupy a higher status in the society. Thus in the class of elite are included the intellectuals and the persons belonging to upper strata of the society. This elitist class is responsible for all the progressive movements. This class provides leadership and is responsible for the prosperity of the country. These persons usher in the political, economic, cultural and religious progress. Without this class no country can make any progress and the wonderful progress made anywhere in the world is due to elite groups. In ancient India also the elite groups were responsible for all progress. During the middle ages the elite groups became very weak. In modern times, the nationalist and freedom movements were led by this class. Now we shall study the various groups which constitute the elite class.

Intelligentsia

As we have referred to earlier, the class of intellectuals is the most important class of the elite groups. In the modern times under the impact of Western culture, a new class of intellectuals has emerged imbibing the values of nationalism, democracy,

positivism etc. The Brahmo Samaj established by Raja Rammohan Roy, did the pioneering work. In the first decade of the 19th century, the number of educated Indians was very small. Gradually, schools, colleges and universities were set up and by the middle of the 19th century the number of educated Indians was formidable. This intellectual class made a significant contribution towards the development of modern Indian nationalism. They started numerous progressive and reformist movements. All the political parties were launched by the intellectuals and they were the leaders. These persons spread the message of freedom and nationalism through education. They also produced a vast amount of patriotic and nationalist literature in the various regional languages. Among this group there were eminent scientists, poets, historians, philosophers, economists and social thinkers. These persons studied the Western culture, the Western society and Western ideology and applied the conclusions of their research to the solution of our national problems. Between 1851 and 1884, a number of intellectual associations were set up and they demanded the indianization of the government services. After 1857, a number of universities were set up and this swelled the ranks of highly literate Indians. In 1885 an all India political organization named *Indian National Congress* came into existence. The proceedings of the Congress used to be in English because all its leaders were English educated. Subsequent to the establishment of Indian National Congress, the history of Indian national movement is the history of Indian National Congress. Gradually, the movement of I.N.C. spread to middle and lower classes but the leadership remained in the hands of the intellectuals. The leaders of both moderate and extremist groups in the Congress were intellectuals. After 1918, there was a rapid progress of the national movement and its leadership came in the hands of M.K. Gandhi, C. R. Das, Moti Lal Nehru, Vithalbhai Patel, C. Rajagopalachari, Rajendra Prasad, Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhash Chandra Bose and others.

Besides Indian National Congress, there were political parties representing other communities and their leadership was also in the hands of intellectuals. For example, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was the

leader of the backward classes The future of the country depends upon the intellectuals.

Capitalist Class

Besides the intellectuals, the capitalist class constitutes another elite group. These persons are leaders in the trade and commerce. They control the economic power. In India this group came into existence with the development of trade and commerce.

Contribution of Press

In modern India press has made a significant contribution in the development of nationalism. In all countries the nationalist movements have been spread and pushed up through propaganda carried on by the press. The intellectuals in France took the help of press to propagate their ideals. In England, Germany, Italy and other European countries the press made a significant contribution. In the pre-British India, in the absence of the press, it was difficult to propagate one's views. During the British rule there was growth of press and this promoted nationalist awakening. Raja Rammohan Roy was the founder of the nationalist press. In political movement the newspapers made a significant contribution. Many national leaders set up their own magazines and newsletters to disseminate their views. M.K. Gandhi propagated his views through the newsmagazine *Young India* and B.G. Tilak did so through *Kesari* and *Maratha*. Thus the various political parties adopted the press for propagation of their views. Besides political parties the elite groups also issued newspapers etc. Some newsmagazines were issued by students. With spread of nationalist movement the demand for the freedom of press was also voiced. Gradually, new laws were enforced which helped the freedom of press. Undoubtedly, the nationalist press has been an effective instrument in the growth of nationalist movement.

Anti-caste Movement

With the growth of nationalism and extension of English education the educated persons began a review of the social institutions. The caste-system was criticized and a campaign for its eradication was launched. The new proprietary rights, the growth of cities, new legal system, new social system, the beginning of class conflict and the

impact of modern education gave a blow to the caste system. The political movements also worked for its eradication though the politicization of society has given encouragement to this system, too. The Indian caste system is a great obstacle in the democratization of the Indian society. Therefore, all eminent leaders have pleaded for its eradication. Among these leaders the names of Raja Rammohan Roy, D.N. Thakur, K.C. Sen, Swami Dayananda, Mahadev Govind Ranade etc. are noteworthy. On the other hand, some caste-based organizations also sprang up. An attempt to provide special protection to low castes has also encouraged the caste system.

Campaign Against Untouchability

Along with the campaign against caste system, a campaign against untouchability was also launched. A number of reform movements were started in this connection. The history of these reform movements is hoary and the names of Lord Buddha, Ramanuja, Ramananda, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Sant Tukaram etc. are notable. Arya Samaj, under the stewardship of Swami Dayananda, played a significant role in this connection. M.K. Gandhi made the removal of untouchability a mission of his life. B.R. Ambedkar made a valiant attempt to uplift the condition of backward classes and infuse in them a sense of honour. In 1932 M.K. Gandhi established an All India Harijan Sewak Sangh. The new economic forces, modern education, national movement, urbanization and industrialization also helped in this matter.

Religious Reform Movements

The nationalist movement in India has also shown itself in the form of religious reform movements. Most of the religious movements desired to promote the democratic values. Brahmo Samaj, Prarthana Samaj and Arya Samaj were such religious movements. Besides Hindus there were religious movements among Muslims also. Many political leaders also participated in these religious movements. Among these persons the names of Sri Aurobindo, B.G. Tilak and M.K. Gandhi are notable. Most of the political leaders in India were religious minded. Very few political leaders in India were materialist. That is why the Indian politics was dominated by religion. The dominance of M.K. Gandhi on the Indian politics was due to this factor. But after 1930, rationalist and materialist

movements gained momentum. With the establishment of the communist party the philosophy of Marxism became popular in India. In Muslims, Ahmediya and Aligarh movements were reformist movements. Among the Muslim reformists, the names of Shah Abdul Aziz of Delhi, Syed Ahmad of Bareilly, Sheikh Karamat Ali of Jaunpur, Kazi Shariatulla of Faridpur and Sir Mohammed Iqbal are notable. Sheikh Abdul Halil Sharar of Uttar Pradesh and Tyabji of Bombay also participated in the reform movement.

The religious reform movements have both helped and hindered the nationalist movement. For example, some of the Muslim religious reform movements were responsible for encouraging the feeling of communalism and the mystical teachings of religious reformers encouraged life negating philosophy. These factors have militated against purposeful social reconstruction.

Political Movements

The political movements in India were an expression of the nationalist sentiments. Modern nationalism emerged as a reaction to the foreign domination, because the British rulers were exploiting Indians for their own ends. The first expression of Indian nationalism manifested itself for the first time in 1828 in the form of Brahmo Samaj. In 1851, various political groups organized themselves under the banner of British India Society. In 1857, the entire country rose in rebellion against the British rule. This was a sharp reaction against the exploitation by the British. The struggle of 1857 cannot be strictly termed as freedom struggle because various individuals had personal motives in this matter. But this has to be recognized that the ultimate aim of these rebels was the freedom from the foreign domination. Therefore, this movement inspired a sense of patriotism among the people. It also proved that the Hindus and Muslims can fight unitedly against the foreign domination. This encouraged the concept of one nation, embracing both communities. The British became aware of the serious implications of this for them and they ever tried to sow the seed of dissension among the two. They adopted the policy of divide and rule. It was this policy which ultimately led to the partition of the country. In 1871, British suppressed the 'Wahabi' movement. In 1870 agricultural economy was very unsound. Between 1867 and 1880 India faced a number

of famines. Of these the famine of 1877 was most acute. This affected about 60 millions. The agricultural economy was completely ruined and at places there were Kissan rebellions. When arrangement for the imperial court for Queen Victoria in Delhi in 1877 were made, this added insult to the injury. People were infuriated. The Vernacular Act of 1878 and the Arms Act of 1879 fomented further the seeds of disaffection. In 1882 government reduced the levy on imported Lancashire textiles in order to encourage the industry in Britain. This also annoyed people. People were now convinced that the Britishers were exploiting them.

All this encouraged disaffection among the educated. The study of the freedom movements in other countries and an acquaintance with the writings of liberal thinkers inspired a new wave of enthusiasm in the Indian intellectuals. By 1883, the disaffection had become explosive.

Contribution of Intellectuals

As we have referred to earlier, the intellectuals made a significant contribution to the growth of Indian National Movement. From 1885 to 1905, the leadership of the Indian National Movement was in the hands of moderates. Among them W.C. Bonerjee, Anand Mohan Bose, Lalmohan Ghosh, S.C. Majumdar, Ras Bihari Ghosh, S.N. Banerjee from Bengal, Dadabhai Naoroji, Ferozeshah Mehta, Badruddin Tyabji, Apte, Agarkar, Telang, Ranade, Gokhale, Dinshaw Wacha from Bombay and K.P.R. Naidu, Subramanya Aiyer, Anand Charlu, Virraghavchariyar from Madras were the notables. Besides these Keshav Pillai, Madan Mohan Malaviya and among Englishmen, A.O. Hume, Wedderburn and Henry Cotton are worth mentioning. In the Indian National Congress the movement was spearheaded and carried on by the intellectuals and certain capitalist elite. Thus the leadership of the Indian National Movement remained with the elite.

Progress of Political Movement

Under the moderate leadership, the Indian National Congress was more or less a resolution passing body without having a mass base. It used to pass resolutions, listing demands which included among other things Indianization of services, reform of Indian economy

and a cut in the military budget. A demand to encourage the cottage industry was also made. Until 1918, only few of these demands were met. On the contrary the Britishers were making a concerted effort to suppress the nationalist movement. A few ordinances were issued to curb the freedom. This acted as an eye-opener and the faith of the moderates in the fairplay and sense of justice of the British was rudely shaken. This policy of repression adopted by the British encouraged extremism. In 1905, the extremists tried to assert themselves in the conference of INC. Lala Lajpat Rai, Lokmanya Tilak raised the slogan of Swadeshi and boycott of foreign goods. In 1906, Muslim League came into existence to defend and protect the interests of Muslims. Outside Congress a number of revolutionaries carried on their violent protest. The partition of Bengal further kindled the flames of protest and a demand for boycotting foreign goods, national education and autonomy was raised. A protest movement was launched. In Bengal, Punjab and Maharashtra the revolutionary fervour picked up the momentum. In 1907, in the Surat conference of INC, the signs of split between extremists and moderates became visible. After 1907, the government adopted a policy of repression. In 1908, Sri Aurobindo was tried in the court of law. In the same year Lokmanya B.G. Tilak was imprisoned for six years and sent to Mandalay prison. In Punjab Lala Lajpat Rai and Sardar Ajit Singh were exiled from Punjab. In 1918 the moderates walked out of INC and set up Liberal Federation. After this nationalism grew intense in the Congress, and the revolutionary movement spread all over the country and abroad. Among the revolutionaries the names of Madan Lal Dhingra, V.D. Sarvarkar, Sri Aurobindo, Lala Hardayal, Rasbehari Bose, Amichand, Bhagat Singh and Chandra Shekar Azad are noteworthy. On April 13, 1920, Jalianwala Bagh tragedy occurred and this produced deep and wide impact all over the country and abroad.

After this the leadership of Congress passed into the hands of M.K. Gandhi and under his stewardship India got her independence. Under his leadership there was a multi-sided development of the nationalist movement. He made valiant efforts to purge the Indian society of the evils of casteism, communalism and untouchability.

He also worked for the education of women and spread of Swadeshi. In 1920 he launched a non-cooperation movement. In 1923, Swarajya party was formed and by 1925 it became very powerful. Alongwith these movements the philosophies of socialism and Marxism also found roots here. In 1928, Simon Commission was boycotted. On December 23, 1929, M.K. Gandhi, T.B. Saprú, M.A. Jinnah and Motilal Nehru met the Viceroy and put up the demand for Dominion status. On January 26, 1930, a resolution demanding full freedom was passed by INC in Lahore. In the same year civil disobedience movement started and a bonfire was made of foreign goods. Within Congress a socialist group was formed. In 1937, Congress agreed to form Government in various states. In 1939, a conflict between the rightists and leftists came to the fore and a Forward Bloc was established to represent the views of the leftists.

Alongwith nationalist movement, Mohammad Ali Jinnah led the Muslims and demanded a separate state for them. Ultimately in 1947, India was given freedom but it was partitioned.

Stages of Nationalist Movement

(I) *Before 1885* : Before 1885, Raja Rammohan Roy and other enlightened Indians worked for the freedom of press and certain administrative reforms.

(II) *1885 to 1905* : During this period moderates led the nationalist movement. Among them were educated and rich people. These persons worked for the Indianization of services and economy.

(III) *1905 to 1918* : During this period the leadership passed into the hands of extremists. Because some persons had tried to base the movement on Hindu Philosophy, in reaction the Muslim communalism grew and Muslim League was established.

(IV) *1918 to 1934* : During this period the nationalist movement spread to the masses. This was a period of mass awakening when people were infused by the spirit of patriotism. After the world war the faith of people in the British justice and fairplay was rudely shaken. A number of international events helped the growth of nationalism. The industrialists and capitalists also supported the nationalist movement, because Swadeshi and boycott of foreign goods were in their interest. M.K. Gandhi's call of class cooperation in

place of class conflict also drew the support of capitalists. In the same period, however, the philosophy of Marxism became popular in India. Between 1930 and 1934 M.K. Gandhi launched civil disobedience movement and young men and women participated in it on a large scale.

(V) 1934 to 1939 : During this period Subash Chandra Bose established a new party named *Forward Block*. The power and influence of Muslim League increased. Among the students, Kisans and industrial labourers, Communism became popular. A number of new organizations of students, Kisans and labourers emerged and these supported the Congress.

(VI) 1939 to 1947 : During this period there was multi-pronged growth of nationalism in India and on August 15, 1947, the country became free.

After this one could observe a contradiction in the national life. While, on the one hand, there was development of nationalist tendencies, on the other hand parochialism was receiving a boost. This had given rise to many disintegrating forces in the national life. The present state of affairs is far from satisfactory. Politicization in India is increasing. On the one hand, democratization is going on, on the other the tendencies of fascism and communism are raising their head. What will be the future shape of things cannot be predicted in view of the complex and contradictory forces operating in the society at the movement. But this much is certain that the elite will play a crucial role in shaping the future.

Democratization and Politicization in India

Abraham Lincoln's definition of democracy as a government of the people, by the people and for the people is the most appropriate. Though there are many definitions, none is so complete as Lincoln's definition. Democracy is a people's government in which the persons elected by the people run the affairs of the state. The ideals of democracy are Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. In democracy an attempt is made to establish political and economic equality. In democracy a person has the freedom to express his opinion, form associations and to engage in any valid or constitu-

tional activity. The ultimate aim of democracy is not the efficiency of government but to promote a sense of brotherhood among people. Democracy provides an opportunity in which a man can achieve maximum growth of his personality.

Though democracy is a government by the majority group, but the protection of the interests of minorities also is a crucial element of democracy. In view of this, Robert Dahl has written, "If there is anything to be said for the process that actually distinguishes democracy (or polyarchy) from dictatorship, it is not discoverable in the clearest distinction between government by a majority and government by a minority. The distinction comes much closer to being one between government by a minority and government by minorities."³ Indeed democracy is not an end but a means. According to William David, "...democracy is a form of government wherein the will of the people is promptly and accurately executed."⁴

Is India Fit For Democracy?

The British did not consider India to be fit for democracy. According to them India needed the support of British empire for its protection. According to J.S. Mill, India is so populous a country that direct elections are unthinkable. Elections even for the municipalities will have to be indirect. From Dufferin to Montague the Englishmen thought India unfit for the parliamentary form of government. But the Indian experiment with democracy has belied all the fears. Indeed India has had a long tradition of democracy. The eminent Indian thinkers like M.G. Ranade, Dadabhoy Naoroji and G.K. Gokhale showed that there was a grass root democracy in India and that it was not a new concept. The Indian leaders were well conversant with the various forms of government and by consensus they chose parliamentary form of democracy for India.

Characteristics of Indian Democracy

The Indian Constitution has quite clearly fixed the form of Indian democracy. Its chief characteristics are :

(1) *Parliamentary form* : Instead of being a republican form of government India has chosen to be a parliamentary form of government. Under it the representatives of people constituting the parliament are the supreme.

(2) *Federal* : Another feature of Indian democracy is its federal character. Lord Bryce has characterized U.S.A. as "republic of republics". The same thing holds true in the case of India. The Article I of Indian Constitution describes India as Union of States. According to our Constitution the states are autonomous. They have full freedom in certain spheres but in others they are dependent upon the centre. Though it is true that in India the centre has wider powers than the states, this is correct in view of the fact that a newly emergent nation requires a strong centre to curb the fissiparous tendencies. There are a number of matters even then in which the states enjoy full freedom and unless there is total constitutional breakdown the centre does not interfere in their internal matters.

(3) *Dual Government* : Because there are central and state administrations in simultaneous operation in India, there is a dual government in India. In the centre also there are three independent governmental wings, viz., Legislature, Executive and Judiciary.

(4) *Collective Responsibility* : In the Indian democracy, the Council of Ministers both in states and centre are collectively, responsible to their respective legislatures. Therefore, even when one minister resigns it is an occasion for the resignation of the entire government. No minister is singly responsible for any act of the government. The entire council of ministers is responsible for each act.

(5) *Triple List of Administrative Subjects* : There are three lists of administrative subjects : the Central, the State and Concurrent. In the central list there are 97 subjects. These are exclusively under the jurisdiction of the centre. In the state list there are 66 subjects ; legislation on these matters is the sole jurisdiction of the states. In the concurrent list there are 47 subjects ; both centre and states can legislate on these matters.

Democratization by Indian Constitution

The freedoms guaranteed by the Indian constitution provide a sound basis for the democratization of Indian society. In the chapter III, articles 12 to 35 of the constitution guarantee fundamental rights to the Indian people. The intent of these rights is to respect the human personality. By article 32 of the constitution a

citizen has the right to approach the Supreme Court for the enforcement of the fundamental rights. The supreme court is empowered to strike down any legislation or act of government which curtails these rights. The personal freedom is the cornerstone of the true democracy. Besides equality and fraternity, freedom is the most essential constituent of democracy. This freedom is established and guaranteed by the rule of law and the judiciary is its protector : The articles 14, 19, 21, 22 and 32 guarantee freedom to the Indian citizen. According to article 14, every citizen is equal before law. According to article 19, every citizen has freedom of speech and expression. No society can afford to give indefinite freedom to its members. Therefore, the Indian Constitution has defined these freedoms and also made certain provisions about their restriction. According to article 21, no one can be deprived of any freedom except through a valid process of law. Article 22 empowers a citizen to move the supreme court against his arrest etc. During emergency, of course, some of these freedoms can be suspended.

Decentralization of Power

Another basis of democratization in India is the decentralization of power. By establishing the Panchayats in villages and investing them with wide powers, India has decentralized the political power and attempted to restore the ancient rural democracy. This helps to apprise people with the administrative problems and participate directly in the task of governing. Even the Britishers were impressed by the role of rural Panchayat. It is undoubtedly a very creditable institution and speaks volumes for the political wisdom of our ancients. However, in the recent past, the institution of Panchayat has been infected by a host of evils. The maximum politicization can be seen in Panchayats. In modern Panchayats the common interests of the village are sacrificed at the altar of sectarian gains. The elections to the Panchayats are fought on political basis and these are used to subserve the ends of their political masters. Thus the evil of politicization can be seen at every step. The politicization of rural India has encouraged casteism and now elections to the Panchayats are fought openly on the basis of caste alignments. After elections in order to keep themselves in power they subserve the interests of their res

pective castes. The various problems like communalism, regionalism, linguism and parochialism are the direct outcome of politicization. The dream of village self-rule visualised by M.K. Gandhi may not materialize if this politicization continues. The chances of its reversal are almost nil. The main reasons for this state of affairs is the lack of proper education. The decentralization no doubt helps the process of democratization but it can prove beneficial only if the power goes to deserving hands.

Factors of Success

The present government favours not political democratization but economic democratization also. It aims at the establishment of democratic socialism in India. In the absence of economic progress there can be no real democracy. Without economic equality the political equality is meaningless. In order to achieve economic equality India has undertaken planned development. The following are the important factors for the success of democracy :

(1) *Election* : The freedom to elect one's representatives in the government is the fundamental basis of democracy. For the proper use of this freedom the citizens must be well educated. The elections must be free and fair and there should be no element of fear or intimidation in them. If any person employs unlawful means to secure his election, it should be set aside. There is such a provision in India. The elections can be challenged in the court of law.

(2) *Political freedom* : For the success of democracy the freedom of speech, expression and association is most essential.

(3) *Education* : Without education there can be no democracy. A democracy of illiterates is a contradiction in terms. In the absence of sufficient education elections become a farce. In this respect the situation in India is not satisfactory.

(4) *Development of Means of Communication* : In order to educate the public the means of communication must be well developed. The newspapers, radio, cinema and television help to educate the public. The development of railway and road service are also necessary for democracy.

(5) *Independent Judiciary* : For the success of democracy, an independent judiciary is a must. Only an independent judiciary

can ensure that there are no abridgements of rights of the citizen. In India the judiciary is independent of both executive and legislature. During his presidency, Shri V.V. Giri appeared before the supreme court and thus vindicated its honour.

(6) *Accountable Administration* : In democracy the government is responsible to the people because it is they who elect their representatives. Therefore, in a democracy, administrative machinery and the policy must be accountable to people. In India our administration is not truly responsive to people. There is on the one hand, undue interference by the politicians in the administration and, on the other hand, the British rule hangover continues in which administration was unresponsive. Now that the people are becoming aware of their rights and privileges the administrator is becoming more cooperative. But for a healthy democracy we must have an administration that is fully responsive to people's needs and aspirations.

(7) *Growth of Middle Class* : For the success of democracy a powerful middle class is necessary. It is the middle class which is responsible for maintaining and sustaining the healthy growth of the democratic institutions.

(8) *Freedom to Form Political Parties* : Last, but not the least, requirement for the growth of democracy is the freedom to put forth one's political demands and to form a political party to accomplish them. In India people enjoy this freedom. There is no ban on political activity. In modern India political parties of all hues and shades are in the arena, competing for people's patronage. So many parties merged to form a single party. They succeeded in capturing power at centre. The Congress has faced split. In border states regional parties are to the fore. All this goes to prove that in India there is no bar on political activity. However, a party which wants dismemberment of India or owes open loyalty some foreign powers is not allowed. This restriction of course is the most rational, because no country can allow its own liquidation.

Problem of Adult Franchise

The critics of Indian democracy find fault with it because under it every adult, irrespective of his educational or financial qualifica-

tions, has a right to vote. A University professor and a peasant wholly illiterate have same political value. Both have one vote each. Before independence only a limited group of persons had this right. After independence everyone got the voting right. The rich and poor, educated and uneducated were brought on the same level. As we have referred earlier, education is an essential ingredient of democracy. By endowing everyone with the voting right, the sanctity of political choice is lost, because an uneducated person cannot exercise his choice freely. Moreover, the better off people lose interest in elections because in India votes are weighed but not counted. There is a tendency of block voting. All this has given rise to indiscipline. Money and muscle power are more important in winning elections than moral stature and brain power.

But the advocates of adult franchise consider it to be a wise step. According to them this checks leftism and thus helps democracy. The voting right is a powerful instrument of political and social education. Because of voting right there is political awakening among the masses and they participate in the political gatherings and listen to various viewpoints. This is a fine source of their education. Though the need of proper education is not denied for the success of democracy, withdrawal of the adult franchise is no remedy.

Obstacles to Democracy : Below we discuss the obstacles in the path of democracy :

(1) *Illiteracy :* As we referred earlier, without education there can be no democracy. Without education people do not know their rights and duties and cannot conduct themselves properly as citizens.

(2) *Poverty :* The poor people have no time or leisure for anything. They are not aware of their rights. They are easily exploited by others. Therefore, poverty is a great hindrance in the way of democracy.

(3) *Pressure of Population :* India is a country of teeming millions. In spite of all attempts to check, it is growing very fast. In 1980, it had crossed the 65 crore mark. The fast growing population can offset all our plans and even the best brains and most efficient planning cannot check economic deterioration if the

population grows unchecked. Therefore, for the success of democracy population must be checked.

(4) *Low capital* : Because of low rate of investment the progress of industrialization is not satisfactory. A poor country obviously cannot save much.

(5) *Low productivity* : Both in agriculture and industry our productivity is low and this comes in the way of satisfactory economic progress.

(6) *Problem of Foreign Investment* : It is not possible to get foreign aid without political strings. The donor of aid tries to impose his own condition. This constitutes a threat to democracy.

(7) *Moral Crisis* : In the past decades the moral standards have fallen steeply and this is posing serious threat to the integrity of our social fabric. Our political leadership is thoroughly discredited. Their sense of moral values is conspicuous by its absence. There is all round corruption. The caste considerations and not merit compel the choice of political candidates. Even educational institutions are thoroughly infected with corruption. This must be reversed if democracy has to have any future.

(8) *Disintegrating Forces* : Today a number of disintegrating forces have come to the fore. The problem of language has become very thorny. It may lead to serious fight between South and North. The virus of communalism is still with us. The regionalism is raising its head. All these disintegrating forces, if allowed to go on unchecked, will spell national ruin.

(9) *Foreign Threat* : Indian democracy, besides internal problems, is faced with foreign threats. We have long borders. The border states are vulnerable to foreign influences. The problems of Nagaland, Mizoram etc. clearly show that the Indian democracy is facing real foreign threat.

Politicization in India

Tendency towards politicization

By politicization we mean the preponderance of politics in the different spheres of life. After independence and the establishment of democracy in India there is concentration of power in the

political hands. The politicians now-a-days freely interfere in administration and are able to influence it to the benefit of themselves and their friends and relatives. This has naturally made political power very alluring. In modern India the political power is the fount of all other powers. Therefore, the persons of different classes are busy making maximum exertions to win and corner the political power. The amount of power and prestige enjoyed by the political leaders in modern India is unmatched by the leaders in science, culture and arts. The political leader is welcome everywhere. The people throng in large number wherever he goes; he is hailed by them and processions are taken out in his honour; his death results in national mourning. All this excites the envy of the educated men and women. In no other progressive and developed country the politician is accorded so much honour and importance. The inordinate importance given to the political leaders in India goes to prove that the pursuit of cultural goals does not have the same importance as the political power. The circulation of newspapers is progressively going up. With the introduction of radios in the remote corners of the country the people are becoming interested in the political news. Interest in the political news clearly exhibits the tendency towards politicization.

Politicization in Social sphere

Politics dominates various aspects of our social life today. In India, the evil of casteism has weakened on account of social and cultural changes; but the political factors have given it a fresh lease of life and it is once again raising its ugly head. The politicians are exploiting the sentiment of casteism for their nefarious ends and not for the genuine welfare of the caste. Similarly, communalism, linguism and regionalism are being exploited by the politicians not for the interest of any community, language or religion but for the selfish political ends. Not only the castes but marriage and family have also been affected by politics. In urban areas the capitalists after acquiring a lot of wealth make it a point to corner political power. In municipalities and corporations the elections are fought with selfish political motives. After

success in elections, grinding of one's own axes and not commonweal is their real purpose.

Politicization in Government Services

Political considerations seem to prevail in appointment to Government services. The top politicians try to fill up top government with men loyal to them. In administrative and police forces the chief ministers and other members of their cabinet try to have men of their confidence at key posts.

Politicization in Education

In the field of education even, a number of appointments are made not according to merit but due to political considerations. The appointment of Vice-Chancellor is usually a political appointment. Even school college managements are befouled by politics. The academic atmosphere today is befouled by politics. The politicians are busy using students as tools for their nefarious ends. This is resulting in progressive deterioration in the academic standards.

Politicization in Economic Sphere

In both private and public sectors politics dominates economic activity. In the private sector the top posts in big industrial houses are occupied by the relatives of the management. The welfare of the labour is not the primary consideration with them; they are more concerned with subserving their private ends. But maximum politicization is to be found in the public sector. In the recent past there have been demonstrations to get the steel industry established in the particular areas. At places, these demonstrations have been violent. The people in various states want maximum number of industries in their areas, because this enhances the opportunities of employment. However, some industries cannot be started in some areas because of adverse economic factors, for example, undeveloped means of communications. But political pressure is exerted to bypass economic and rational factors. The politicians know best how to swim in troubled waters. They grind their own axes without national considerations. Thus, reason is excluded from their thinking. This adversely affects national life.

Boundary Disputes

After independence the boundaries of the states have been re-aligned a number of times. The areas of some states have been

lopped off and added to other states. A number of new states have been carved out. Punjab has been split into Haryana and West Punjab. A new state of Nagaland has been created. There is now demand for divisions of U.P. and M.P. into smaller units. While there may be some merit behind these demands, these are by and large politically motivated. More the states, more are the posts of political incumbents. Therefore, behind the creation of new states is the factor of political motivation and selfish interests.

Politicization in Culture

There is so much politicization in India that even the cultural field is not free from its influence. Many a time the selection of all-India sports teams is made not on the basis of merit but on political considerations. In Olympic games the number of officials sometimes exceeds the number of players. The same thing is also true with regard to cultural troupes sent out of this country. The artists who are able to curry favour with politicians get included in these troupes. The government grants to cultural associations are frequently made on political considerations.

The above survey of politicization in various fields clearly brings out the urgency of stemming this rot. Foreign observers are surprised to see that an Indian attaches so much importance to political leaders and discusses political news with so much avidity and ignores the cultural and artistic activities. The evil of politicization can only be removed if the elitist class of industrialists, professors, doctors, engineers, artists and literatures stop attaching too much importance to political news and politicians. They should realize the importance of their professions and assert its worth. For example, they should not brook interference of politicians in their respective fields.

Bureaucracy and Bossism in India

Bureaucracy in India

The functions of all modern states are divided into three categories — Legislative, Judicial and Executive. The executive functions the world over are exercised by the government officials. The hierarchy of government servants is known as bureaucracy.

The system of bureaucracy was inaugurated in India 100 years ago during the British rule. The government in India during the British rule was carried on by government servants while the policy decisions were made by politicians in England. After independence the decision making is done by the local politicians but the execution is done by the bureaucracy.

Organization of Bureaucracy

Under the Indian administrative system the states are divided into a number of districts. The executive head of the state is the Governor. The head of the district executive body is called District Magistrate (D.M.) or Collector. Again, the district is divided into many sub-divisions known as Paraganas. The head of the sub-division is S.D.M. or Paraganadhish. He carries out the government at the sub-division level. The Paraganas are again divided into Tehsils and the head of the Tehsil is Tehsildar. A Tehsil is made up of many villages. The head of each village is a Patwari. He reports to the Tehsildar who in turn reports to S.D.M. and so on.

In the capital of each state there are extensive government departments. The state secretariat is the controlling body. There is a council of Ministers in each state and this is headed by the Chief Minister. The Chief Minister is aided by his council of Ministers, each of whom heads one or more departments. Each minister is assisted by some junior ministers. Each administrative department is headed by a secretary who is a government official. Besides Secretary there are Additional and Joint Secretaries to assist him. They, in turn, are assisted by Deputy Secretaries.

Central Secretariat

The standard formation of state secretariat follows the pattern of Central Secretariat. But the powers and responsibilities of the Central Secretariat are much more. In the Indian administrative system the central secretariat occupies the place of paramountcy. The secretariat executes the policies determined by the Central Government. It has dual relationship, on the one hand, it is in touch with the public, because the impact of execution of policies is felt on the public and, on the other hand, in matters of policy it takes direction from the government. Briefly its functions are :

- (i) To help and aid the Ministers in the determination and modification of the policies
- (ii) To formulate laws, rules, bye-laws etc.
- (iii) Planning and preparation of agenda. To make budgets of various ministries and keep a fiscal control over spending.
- (iv) To supervise the administrative department and oversee the works of semi-autonomous bodies.
- (v) Coordination of policies. Liaison work between states and centre and other agencies.
- (vi) To improve the efficiency of staff.
- (vii) To help ministers in carrying out their responsibilities

Administrative Reforms Commission

After independence we find considerable changes in the functioning of secretariat consequent upon the proposals of Administrative Reforms Commission. Before independence all policy planning was done by I.C.S. officers who used to be sent to the centre on deputation by various states for specific periods. Now, these officers are not sent by the states but there is now a central cadre. As the period of availability of these persons is now not limited they can carry on their jobs uninterrupted for long spells. Before independence, the specialists were not consulted in the determination of the policy but now they are. Now there are advisors in every ministry and they are technocrats. The number of staff has also gone up considerably after independence. Now, the secretariat is a tremendous body of staff which includes advisors, researchers and other specialists.

Standard of Recruitment

In the secretariat the I.A.S. Officers enjoy important places. Persons to these services are recruited after open All India Competition and Interview. These persons usually belong to elite class. Various surveys show that very few persons from villages are able to enter these services. In 1966-67, of 126 I.A.S. Officers only 27 were from rural areas. In 1968-69, of 111 I.A.S. Officers only 26 had come from villages. As the majority of I.A.S. officers do not have first hand knowledge of rural conditions they are not able to execute effectively the policies to the satisfaction of villagers. This imbalance should be rectified. An I.A.S. Officer

must be at least a graduate. In 1966-67, of 126 officers 28 were from Delhi University, 15 from Allahabad, 14 from Madras and 11 from Calcutta University.

Code of Conduct

A code of conduct for the bureaucrats is very essential for effective administration. According to a code of conduct framed in 1968 the government is empowered to declare illegal any strike in the essential services and to punish summarily anyone participating in such a strike. Such bodies were framed which were to suggest the means to improve welfare of public servants. There is an All India Organization of I.A.S. having its centre in Delhi. Following are the important rules to keep the services free from politics :

- (1) No public servant shall be a member of any political party or a party having some connection with politics. He will not participate in any manner in any political movement.
- (2) A public servant shall prevent any member of his family from participating in any movement which may be in any way intended against the government or subversive of it. If he is unable to control them it becomes his duty to bring this fact to the notice of government.
- (3) A public servant shall not take part in any elections nor would try to influence these.
- (4) A public servant shall exercise his voting right very discretely.
- (5) A public servant shall neither broadcast over the radio nor write any book without the prior sanction of the government. He shall not express any opinion prejudicial to government.

Importance of Bureaucracy

The above code of conduct makes it clear that the government is interested in keeping the services aloof from politics. This is most essential for government work to go on un-interrupted. If the bureaucracy is unable to maintain its function with the change of political power there will be administrative breakdown. The bureaucracy is the pipeline through which government laws and rules flow and administration is carried on. A strong bureaucracy is the guarantee against administrative breakdown and chaos.

Concluding Remarks

In contemporary Indian social philosophy, the idealistic trend is so dominant that to a casual glance it will appear to be the sole trend. This is particularly so since Indian masses have always tried to maintain a continuity with the past and Indian elite always tried to connect new ideas with the old and interpret the old in the new light. Therefore, among the contemporary Indian social thinkers Vivekananda, Tagore and Gandhi stand as the foremost, perhaps only surpassed by Sri Aurobindo, who having wider experience of East and West and of the different fields of social life in India, could present a more synthetic social philosophy.

In spite of the importance of this idealist trend one should remember that there is also a realist trend in contemporary Indian social thinking. Besides Vivekananda, Tagore and Gandhi who thought over social and political problems in the background of Vedanta philosophy there were B.R. Ambedkar, M.N. Roy and Jawaharlal Nehru, among others, who were inspired by the Western ideas and who championed humanist philosophy of the Western type. Thus, while contemporary Indian social philosophy may be called humanistic, one should distinguish in it atleast two types of humanism, one inspired by ancient Vedanta philosophy and the other derived from the humanism prevalent in the West. While the former has the advantage of having a wider appeal to Indian masses due to its being in tradition with the national culture, the latter is more realistic, more to the point, some times more logical and consistent and appealing to a major part of the intelligentsia of the country. Perhaps a suitable social philosophy may be worked out by a synthesis of these two trends. This may provide a theoretical basis for those engaged in planning social reconstruction in India.

The Renaissance thinkers were still under the influence of the British people. Whatever social and political reform they asked for was not revolutionary in nature. Though they were very much concerned about the backward condition of the country, their sole remedy was to approach the British government to bring about those reforms to social and political legislation. Contemporary Indian thinkers, particularly Vivekananda, Tagore and Gandhi who raised a

voice of revolt against foreign domination, returned to ancient Indian thought for inspiration as well as guidance and suggested solutions of social and political problems in the light of ancient Indian wisdom. Thus, in contemporary social philosophy one finds an indelible stamp of Indian culture. Contemporary Indian philosophy has not chalked out a path deviating with the past. It is in tradition with Indian culture. It is based upon ages old philosophical traditions of the land mainly represented by the Vedanta philosophy. Spiritualism or idealism was first presented in India in the philosophy of Vedanta. This was the dominant trend of ancient Indian thought even in the continued to dominate the philosophical thinking even in the contemporary time. The social implications of the ancient Indian spiritualism can be seen in the contemporary social philosophy particularly those of Vivekananda, Tagore and Gandhi. They presented a social philosophy based upon neo-vedanta metaphysics.

Social Implications of Neo-Vedanta

The metaphysical background of contemporary social philosophy may be called Neo-Vedanta. Neo-Vedanta metaphysics was the old Vedanta philosophy in a new garb. In it the Vedanta philosophy was re-interpreted according to the contemporary needs. But the fundamental spirit of the Vedanta philosophy remained the same. According to Vedanta philosophy, the totality is spiritual in nature known as the Brahman. Individuality and collectivity are the expressions of this spiritual essential unity. Therefore, the principles governing individuality and collectivity are the same. Thus, Vedanta philosophy helps us in deriving useful implications for social philosophy. For example, it may be inferred that the life of the individual and the society is governed by identical principles and this understanding may give sound guidance in solving the problem of the relationship of the individual and the collectivity. But, on the other hand, the idea that collectivity and individuality are expressions of the divine power, coupled with the Karma theory and the theory of rebirth, has resulted in social escapism, exploitation of the weak and indifference to the social good. In tradition with ancient Indian Vedanta the Neo-vedanta thinkers pointed out to one essence underlying different philosophies, religions, social

thinking, individuals and nationalities. This gave a unified world view but since the world was not considered as much real as the Absolute it undermined the status of social philosophy

Neglect of Social Philosophy

The reasons were philosophical, psychological and sociological. Among the philosophical reasons extraterrestrial goal of life in the form of Moksha and the undervaluing of worldly knowledge as ignorance, together with considering social life as means and not as an end are the important reasons. These old philosophical ideas have continued to work in contemporary Indian metaphysics as well. One finds the same emphasis on Moksha as the aim of life and contemporary Indian philosophers did not give any new interpretation to it. Only Sri Aurobindo distinguished between the ideal of individual liberation and cosmic liberation and considered the latter and not the former as the goal of life. This was a good corrective to extraterrestrial bias but the use of the word Moksha has been constantly creating misunderstanding, with the result that generally even now it is being taken as an extraterrestrial goal.

Ancient Indian Vedanta considered worldly knowledge as knowledge of phenomenon as distinct from knowledge of noumenon and since the latter was the real knowledge they called the knowledge of the world an ignorance. This again, was not challenged by our contemporary Indian social thinkers though each one of them clearly said that the worldly knowledge is very important for individual and society. Again, though Vivekananda, Gandhi and Tagore considered social service of the poor and the weak as primary duties, these were always means and never ends. If service of man is a mere means for God realisation, no wonder that it is left aside by those who pursue other means such as prayer, penance, devotion or knowledge etc. Though in theory it appears that the Vedanta philosophy finds out a place for social service, in actual practice it has never been so. This is the reason why decades after the preachings of Vivekananda, Tagore and Gandhi, contemporary Indian society finds a very insignificant place for humanistic ideals or social service.

The psychological reasons for the undermining of social philosophy in ancient Indian thought have been active in our contemporary

times as well. Ancient Indian thinkers and most of the religious people even now consider God realisation possible by the negation of the world. Most of the techniques of the spiritual practices even today are individualistic in character as they were in ancient India. Facts have been neglected, particularly the social facts. Indian philosophers laid more emphasis on knowledge and devotion than on action and, inspite of the protests of some activist thinkers like B.G. Tilak and M.K. Gandhi, this emphasis has continued in our own time. There is small wonder therefore that social philosophy has been neglected.

Inspite of all efforts about industrial progress in India the country even today is primarily agricultural. Therefore, the sociological reasons determining the sorry state of social thinking in ancient India continue right now. Contemporary Indian society is primarily agricultural and therefore slow changing, tradition minded, against new changes, anti-revolutionary, and narrow in outlook. Among the intellegentsia also the traditional trend of thinking being more dominant, there has not been much change in the attitude of social thinkers.

One-Sided Interpretation of History

Our contemporary Indian thinkers, particularly Vivekananda, Tagore and Gandhi, have interpreted history as a Divine process. While the disadvantages of the economic interpretation of history are too obvious to be pointed out here, this Divine interpretation of history also has its own limitations. Inspite of all the emphasis on human efforts by our social thinkers the general masses and even the elite have on the whole been depending upon providence. The ancient message of Gita that whenever the society faces a challenge, God comes in the form of a reincarnation, has only encouraged popular indolence and passivity since the people have been waiting for such an incarnation. Our religious leaders have always had faith in miracles. Therefore, there is no wonder that the people, instead of making efforts for reform or revolution have been waiting for miracles on the part of the God to ameliorate their condition. However sincere may be the efforts of our social thinkers and whatever inner meaning they might have given to their interpretation of history, its impact on masses and even on elite has not been very

healthy. Probably it is due to the reason that in their philosophy of history, historical facts and human planning and efforts never found sufficient place.

Unsuitable Marriage of Politics with Religion

In the field of religion the synthetic approach, presented by contemporary social thinkers, has been definitely an improvement. It has led to religious tolerance and catholicity very much needed in this country which is the home of followers of almost all the great religions of the world. And yet at the same time Gandhi and Vivekananda were proud of being Hindu. They undoubtedly knew the defects of Hindu religion and yet they pleaded that everyone should follow his own religion. The Gandhian formula of recitations from Bible, Quran and Gita in his daily prayer appeared to be a hotch-potch to many of the more serious thinkers. Besides Gandhian synthesis of religion and politics also led to mixing of religion with politics by others who misused it to the disadvantage of the country at large. M.A. Jinnah organised followers of Muslim religion and demanded a separate part of the country for them. In spite of the heroic fight of Gandhi against Jinnah the latter won the game. Whatever may be the reasons behind this disaster one reason may be the unsuitable marriage of politics with religion. Gandhi called himself a religious man and considered it his religious duty to delve in politics. On the other hand, some say that politics has been generally a game of scoundrels and many will not agree that there can be a real synthesis between politics and religion. Though religious basis of social philosophy may have its own advantages it is certainly not without its disadvantages as well. These disadvantages have been very clear in India.

Too Much Traditionalism

In spite of being very well acquainted with the actual condition of different sections of the country and having keen minds required for analysis of these problems, the traditionalism in the thinking of our social thinkers led to the application of old principles to new problems. One may agree that if the problems are indistinguishable the old principles can be certainly applied to them. In clear thinking distinctions, however, are more important than similarities. While social and political problems of our own time appear to be very

much similar to those of the old we should keep our eye particularly upon the distinctions since these distinctions will make a lot of difference in remedies.

Religious Interpretation of Man and Society

Contemporary Indian social thinkers interpreted human nature in a religious and spiritual sense. Man, according to them, was a spark of the Divine. This so-called idealistic interpretation of human nature is oversimplified and far from being adequate. Gandhian principle that whatever is possible in the life of an individual is equally practicable on the mass scale only showed his ignorance of mass psychology. He was in the habit of experimenting upon methods and techniques in his own personal life and thinking that whatever is possible for him to do should be so for any other, he used to apply it on a large scale. This thinking is fallacious and based upon wrong psychology. The fact is that some thing possible for a very religious person may be possible only for exceptional persons and should not be presented as a formula for mass application. This grave defect in the social philosophy of M.K. Gandhi has been the chief reason of its failure to actually and sufficiently influence different fields of social and political life.

In tradition with ancient Indian ideal of harmony these social thinkers everywhere searched for a formula to achieve harmony in social and political fields. It is undeniable that harmony is a healthy principle and nothing is better if it can be achieved, but no one can deny the role of the disintegrating processes such as conflict, competition, aggression and even violence. It can be said in favour of advocates of non violent means that the future of humanity entirely rests upon our faith in them. But human nature, as it appears in history, shows that non-violence is not the best means in every circumstance and so long as human nature remains what it is, it is dangerous to propose the application of non-violent means in every situation.

Besides the definition of the individual on the basis of religion, society too was defined by contemporary Indian social thinkers as an expression of the Divine. This definition, while on the one hand, highlights divine virtues and characteristics, it on the other hand, fails to pay sufficient attention to the animal characteristics

According to contemporary social psychologists masses are more governed by animal instincts rather than rational thinking and still less by spiritual incentives. It is therefore doubtful that religious or spiritual formula may be successful in the case of mass behaviour.

Contradictory Ideas on Social Stratification

In the philosophy of society our thinkers have always admired the ancient Varna system. It is undeniable that there can be no theoretical objection against the Varna system as a basis of social stratification. But who can deny that this very system itself must have something in it which led to its degeneration in caste system and finally in casteism and untouchability. To wage a war against casteism and untouchability on the one hand and to praise Varna system on the other are inconsistent. Too much praise of Varna system smacks of revivalism which is certainly a feature of contemporary Indian social philosophy. Whatever may be said about the principle of equality among different Varnas, in actual practice the followers of this system laid more emphasis upon distinctions rather than upon similarities with the result that more and more disintegration between different Varnas increased.

Concluding Remarks

The above criticism does not mean minimising the merits and advantages of the contemporary Indian social philosophy. Contemporary Indian social philosophers certainly presented a most comprehensive social philosophy and rightly based it upon the traditional philosophy of India. They rightly tried to build up a social philosophy in tradition with ancient Indian idealism and spiritualism. In the fields of social and political philosophy they rightly avoided all types of extremism and endeavoured at synthetic approach. Their analyses and suggestions, however, have not been very consistent. One reason of this inconsistency was their search for deeper solutions of the surface problems. Going to details and always returning to the basic issues has its advantages in thinking but if the surface view of the problems is neglected the solutions offered are far from being successful. It is characteristic of our culture that we are always in search of eternal solutions and never satisfied with temporary arrangements. But some problems in social and political field are temporary and therefore require a temporary

arrangement. Moreover, overemphasis on eternity leads to negligence of social change. Social change is as much necessary for the growth of a society as social stability. In Indian social system while we have craved for stability we have not so much favoured social change. That is one reason why our Society and social thinking has not been sufficiently progressive and revolutionary.

REFERENCES

1. Yogendra Singh in A.B. Shah and C.R.M. Rao (Ed.), *Tradition and Modernity in India*, Maniktalas, Bombay, (1965), p. 52.
2. *Op. cit.*, University of California Press, 1966, p. 6.
3. Chanana, D.R., "Sanskritization and India's North West," *Economic Weekly*, Vol. XIII, No. 9, March 4, 1961, pp. 409-414.
4. Kalia, S.L., "Sanskritization and Tribalization" Bulletin of the Tribal Research Institute, Chindwara, (MP), Vol. 2 No. 4 April 1959, pp. 43-44.
5. Srinivas, M.N., *Social Change in Modern India*, University of California Press (1966), p. 47.
6. *Ibid*, p. 119.
7. Eisenstandt, S.N., *Modernization : Protest and Change*, Prentice Hall of India Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1969, p. I.
8. Dahl, Robert, *A Preface to Democratic Theory*, University of Chicago Press (Chicago), 1956, p. 133.
9. W.M. David and G.S. Halposa (Ed.), *Dilemmas of Democratic Politics in India*, Maniktalas, Bombay, 1966, p. 230.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Original Sources

- Abhidharmakosa* of Vasubandhu, ed. Poussin, L.V., London 1918.
- Acaranga Sutra*, ed. Jacobi, H., London, Oxford, 1882 (P.T.S.), tr. Jacobi, H., SBE, XXII, Oxford, 1884.
- Agnipurana*, ed. Mitra, R., Calcutta, 1873-79; tr. Dutt, M.N. Calcutta, 1901.
- Aitareya Brahmana*, ed. Aufresht, T., Bonn, 1789; tr. Keith, A.B., HOS, XXV, Harvard, 1920.
- Apastamba Dharmasutra*, ed. Buhler, G., Bombay, 1892; tr. Buhler, SBE, II, Oxford, 1879.
- Apastamba Srauta Sutra*, ed. Garbe, R., Calcutta, 1881-1903; ed. and tr. Caland, W., Gottingen-Leipzig-Amsterdam, 1921-28.
- Arthasastra* of Kautilya ed. Shamasastri, R., Mysore, 1924; ed. Ganapati Sastri, Trivandrum, 1924-25; revised 4th edn. of Shamasastri's text ed. Venkatanathacharya, N.S., Mysore, 1960 ed. Kangle, R.P., Bombay, 1960; tr. Shamasastri, R., Mysore, 1961; tr. Kangle, R.P., Bombay 1963.
- Atharvaveda Samhita*, ed. Lanman, C.R., tr. Whitney, W.D., HOS, VII & VIII, Harvard, 1905.
- Baudhayana Dharmasutra*, ed. Hultsch, E., Leipzig, 1884; tr. Buhler, G., SBE, XIV, Oxford, 1882.
- Bhagavadgita*, ed. Belvalkar, S.K., Poona, 1945, tr. Telang, K.T. SBE, VIII, Oxford, 1908.
- Bhagavatapurana*, ed. Paniskar, V.L., Bombay 1920; tr. Dutt, M.N., Calcutta, 1895; tr. Swami, Vijnanananda, Allahabad, 1922-23.
- Bhavisyapurana*, pub. Venkatesvara Press, Bombay, 1910.
- Brihadaranyakaupanisad*, text and tr. Swami Madhavananda, Almora, 1950.
- Brhaspatismṛti*, ed. Aiyangar, K.V.R., Baroda, 1941; tr. Jolly, J., SBE, XXXIII, Oxford, 1889.
- Buddhacarita* of Asvaghosa, ed. Jhonston, E.H., Calcutta, 1936; tr. Cowell, E.B., SBE., XLIX, Oxford, 1894.
- Chandogya Upanisad*, text, tr., Senart, E., Paris, 1930.
- Dhammopada*, ed. and tr. Mrs. Rhys Davids, London, 1931; tr. Max Muller, F., SBE., X, Oxford, 1898.

- Dhiga Nikaya*, ed. Rhys Davids, T.W. and Carpenter, J.E., London, 1890-1911; tr. Rhys Davids, T.W., London, 1899-1921.
- Gautama Dhammasutra*, ed. Srinivasacharya, L., Mysore, 1917; tr. Buhler, G., SBE., II, Oxford, 1879.
- Grhyasutras*, tr. Oldenberg, H., SBE. XXIX, XXX, Oxford, 1886-92.
- Jatakas*, ed. Fausboll, V. London, 1877-97; tr. Cowell, E.B. and others, Cambridge, 1895-1913.
- Kamasutra of Vatsyayana*, ed. Shastri, Damodar, Banaras, 1929; tr. Iyengar, K.R. Lahore, 1921.
- Katyayanasmṛti*, ed. and tr. Kane, P.V., Bombay, 1933.
- Kurmapurana*, ed. Mukhopadhyaya, N., Calcutta, 1890.
- Mahabharata*, Critical ed. Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute. Poona, 1927-1966. tr. Roy, P.C., Calcutta, 1926-32; tr. Dutt, M.N., Calcutta, 1895-1905.
- Maitrayani Samhita*, ed. Von Schroder, L., Leipzig, 1881-86.
- Majjhima Nikaya*, ed. Trenckner, V. and Chalmers, R., London, 1888-1902, tr. Chalmers, London, 1926-27; Horner, I.B., London, 1954-59.
- Manusmṛti*, ed. Mandalik, V.N., Bombay, 1886; Jolly, J., London, 1887; tr. Buhler, G., SBE. XXV, Oxford, 1886; Jha, G., Calcutta, 1922-29.
- Markandeyapurana*, ed. Banerjee, K.M., Calcutta, 1862; tr. Pargiter, F.E., Calcutta, 1904.
- Matsyapurana*, Ananda Sarman Sanskrit Series, Poona, 1907; tr. by a Taluqdar of Oudh, *Sacred Books of Hindus*, Allahabad, 1916-17.
- Milindapanha*, ed. Trenckner, V., London, 1880; tr. Rhys Davids, T.W., SBE. XXXV-XXXVI, Oxford 1890-94.
- Narada Smṛiti*, ed. Jolly, J., Calcutta, 1885; tr. Jolly, J., SBE. XXXIII, Oxford, 1889.
- Ramayana*, ed. Raghuvera, Lahore, 1938; tr. Dutt, M.N., Calcutta, 1892-94; Griffith, R., Benares, 1915.
- Rgveda Samhita* Vaidika Samsodhana Mandala, Poona, 1933-51; tr. Griffith, R., Benares, 1896-97, Max Muller, F. and Oldenberg, H., SBE. XXXII, XLVI Oxford, 1891-97.
- Satapatha Brahmana*, tr. Eggeling, J., SBE. XII, XXVI, XLI, XLIII, XLIV, Oxford, 1882-1900.

Susruta Samhita, ed. Vidyasagara, J., Calcutta, 1889.

Sutrakrtanga, ed. Vaidya, P.L., Poona, 1928 ; tr. Jacobi, H., SBE. XLV, Oxford 1895.

Taittiriya Brahmana, ed. Mitra, R.L., Calcutta, 1855-70.

Taittiriya Samhita, ed. Weber, A., Berlin, 1871-72 ; tr. Keith, A.B., HOS, XVIII, XIX, Harvard, 1920.

Upanisads, The Thirteen Principal Upanisads, tr. Hume, R.E., London, 1931.

Vasistha Dharamasutra, Fuhrer, A.A., Bombay, 1916, tr. Buhler, G., SBE, XIV, Oxford, 1882.

Vayupurana, ed. Mitra, R.L., Calcutta, 1880-88.

Visnusmrti, ed. Jolly, J., Calcutta. 1881 ; tr. Jolly, J., SBE. VII, Oxford, 1880.

Visuddhimagga of Buddhaghosa, ed. Rhys Davids, Mrs. PTS, London, 1920-21 ; tr. Mungtin, P. PTS, London, 1922-31.

Yajnavalkyasmrti, Trivandrum Sanskrit Series, Trivandrum, 1922-24 ; tr. part Vidyarnava, S.C., Allahabad, 1918.

Secondary Sources

Arrian, *History of Alexander and Indica* ; tr. Itiff Robson E., London, New York, 1833.

Majumdar, R.C., *The Classical Accounts of India*, Calcutta, 1960.

McCrindle, J.W., *Ancient India as Described in Classical Literature*, Westminster, 1901.

——— *Ancient India As Described by Megasthenes and Arrian*, Culcutta, 1926.

Aiyangar, K.V.R., *Rajadharma*, Adyar, 1941.

——— *Aspects of Social and Political Systems of Manusmrti*, Lucknow, 1949.

——— *Some Aspects of Hindu View of Life according to Dharma-sastra*, Baroda, 1953.

Altekar, A.S., *State and Government in Ancient India*, Delhi 1955.

Apte, V.M., *Social and Religious Life in the Grhyasutras*.

Auboyer, J., *Daily Life in Ancient India*, Delhi 1965.

Banerjee, S.C., *Dharma Sutra : A Study in their Origin and Development*, Calcutta, 1962.

Basham, A.L., *The Wonder that was India*, London, 1974.

Beteille, Andre, *Castes : Old and New*, Bombay, 1969.

- Bhandarkar, D.R., *Carmichael Lectures*, Calcutta, 1919.
- *Some Aspects of Ancient Hindu Polity*, Benares, 1929.
- Bhargava, P.L., *India in the Vedic Age*, Lucknow, 1971.
- Bhattacharya, Haridas etc., ed., *The Cultural Heritage of India*, 4 vols., Ram Krishna Mission, Calcutta, 1970 (Reprint).
- Bhattacharya, J.N., *Hindu Castes and Sects*, Calcutta, 1968 (reprint).
- Bhattacharya, Tarapada, *The Canons of Indian Art*, Calcutta, 1963.
- Blunt, E.A.H., *The Caste System of Northern India*, Delhi, 1969 (reprint)
- Bongard-Levin, G.M., *Studies in Ancient India and Central Asia*, Calcutta, 1971.
- Bose, A.N., *Social and Rural Economy of Northern India*, Vol. I, Calcutta, 1961, Vol. II, Calcutta, 1945.
- Bose, N.K., *Cultural Anthropology and other Essays*, Calcutta, 1953.
- Bose N.K., *The Structure of Hindu Society*, Delhi, 1975.
- Brough, J., *Early Brahmanical System of Gotra and Pravara*, Cambridge, 1953.
- Buddha Prakash, *Studies in Indian History and Civilization*, Agra, 1962.
- *Aspects of Indian History and Civilization*, Agra, 1965.
- Chakladar, H.C., *Social Life in Ancient India*, Calcutta, 1929.
- Chanana, Devraj, *Slavery in Ancient India*, Delhi, 1960.
- Chattopadhyaya, S. *Social Life in Ancient India* (in the background of the Yajnavalkyasmriti), Calcutta, 1965.
- Chattopadhyaya, B., *The Age of the Kushanas, A Numismatic Study*, Calcutta, 1967.
- *Kushana State and Indian Society*, Calcutta, 1975.
- Choudhary, Radhakrishna, *Vratyas in Ancient India*, Varanasi, 1964.
- Dass, M.M., *Women in Manu and His Seven Commentators*, Varanasi, 1961.
- Das, S.K., *Economic History of Ancient India*, Calcutta, 1925.
- Dasgupta S.N. and De, S.K., *A History of Sanskrit Literature*, Vol 1, Calcutta, 1947.
- De Bary, T.W., etc. ed. *Sources of Indian Tradition*, Varanasi, 1963.
- Derrett, J.D.M., *Religion, Law and the state in India*, London, 1968.
- Desai, A.R., *Social Background of Indian Nationalism*, Bombay, 1948.
- Dikshitar, V.R.R., *War in Ancient India*, Madras, 1948.
- Drakmeier, Charles, *Kingship and Community in Early India*, Bombay, 1962.

- Dutt, N.K., *Origin and Growth of Caste in India*, Vol. I., London 1931.
- Dutta, B.N., *Studies in Indian Social Polity*, Calcutta, 1944.
- Fick, Richard, *The Social Organisation in North-East India in Buddha's Time*, tr. Maitra, S.K., Calcutta, 1920.
- Ghoshal, U.N., *Contributions to the History of Hindu Revenue System*, Calcutta, 1929.
- *The Agrarian System in Ancient India*, Calcutta 1930.
- *History of Hindu Public Life*, Vol. I, Calcutta, 1945.
- *A History of Indian Political Ideas*, Bombay, 1959.
- *Studies in Indian History and Culture*. Calcutta, 1965.
Originally published as *The Beginnings of Indian Historiography and other Essays*, Calcutta, 1949.
- *History of Indian Public Life*, Vol. II, Bombay, 1966.
- Ghurye, G.S., *Indian Costume*, 1951.
- *Caste, Class and Occupation*, Bombay, 1961.
- *Family and Kin in Indo-European Culture*, Bombay, 1962.
- Gopal, Lallanji, *The Economic Life of Northern India, C. A.D. 700-1200*, Delhi, 1965.
- Hazra, R.C., *Puranic Records on Hindu Rites and Customs*, Dacca, 1940.
- Hocart, A.M., *Caste, A Comparative Study*, London, 1950.
- Hopkins, E.W., *The Religions of India*, Boston, 1895.
- *The Great Epic of India*, New York, 1901.
- *India, Old and New*, New York, 1902.
- Hutton, J.H., *Caste in India*, Bombay, 1963.
- Jain, J.C., *Life in Ancient India as Depicted in the Jain Canons*, Bombay, 1947.
- Jain, P.C., *Labour in Ancient India*, New Delhi, 1971.
- Jayaswal, K.P., *Manu and Yajnavalkya, a Basic History of Hindu Law*, Calcutta, 1930.
- *Hindu Polity*, Bangalore, 1943.
- Jha, C., *Hindu Law in its sources*, Allahabad, 1930.
- Kane, P.V., *History of the Dharmasastra*, Poona, 1930 onwards.
- *Hindu Customs and Modern Law*, Bombay, 1950.
- Kangle, R.P., *The Kautilya Arthashastra*, pt. III, A Study, Bombay, 1965.

- Karve, I., *Hindu Society : An Interpretation*, Poona, 1961.
- *Kinship Organisation in India*, Bombay, 1965.
- Ketkar, S.V., *History of Caste in India*, Ithaca N.Y., 1909.
- Kosambi, D.D., *Introduction to the Study of Indian History*, Bombay, 1956.
- *The Culture and Civilization of Ancient India in Historical Outline*, London, 1965.
- Law, B.C., *Some Kshatriya Tribes of Ancient India*, Calcutta, 1924.
- *India as Described in the Early Texts of Buddhism and Jainism*, London, 1941.
- *Tribes in Ancient India*, Poona, 1943.
- Law, N.N., *Studies in Indian History and Culture*, London, 1925.
- *Aspects of Ancient Indian Polity*, Calcutta, 1961.
- MacDonell, A.A. and Keith, A.B., *Vedic Index*, London, 1912.
- Majumdar, B.K., *The Military System in Ancient India*, Calcutta, 1955.
- Majumdar, R.C., *Corporate Life in Ancient India*, Calcutta, 1922.
- ed., *The Vedic Age*, London, 1951.
- ed., *The Age of Imperial Unity*, Bombay, 1951.
- Mandelbaum, D.G., *Society in India*, Bombay, 1972.
- Mehta, R.N., *Pre-Buddhist India*, Bombay, 1939.
- Metraux, Guy. S. and Francois Courzet, ed., *Studies in the Cultural History of India*, Agra, 1965.
- Mookerji, R.K., *Chandragupta Maurya and His Times*, Madras, 1943.
- *Ancient Indian Education*, 1960.
- Mudgal, B.S., *Political Economy in Ancient India*, Kanpur, 1960.
- Nesfield, J.C., *Brief View of the Caste System of the North West Provinces and Oudh*, Allahabad, 1885.
- Pandey, R.B., *Hindu Samskaras*, Delhi, 1969.
- Pant, A.D., *A Critical Study of the Arthasastra Tradition in Ancient Political Thought*, unpublished D. Litt. thesis Allahabad University, 1967.
- Patil, D.R., *Cultural History from the Vayu Purana*, Poona, 1946.
- Prabhu, P.N., *Hindu Social Organisation*, Bombay, 1954.
- Rai, Jaimal, *Rural-Urban Economy and Social Changes in Ancient India*, Varanasi, 1974.
- Rhys Davids, T.W., *Buddhist India*, London, 1903.
- Risley, H.H., *The People of India*, Delhi, 1969 (reprint).

- Roy, U.N., *City and City Life in Ancient India* (Hindi), Allahabad.
- Saran, K.M., *Labour in Ancient India*, Bombay, 1957.
- Sarkar, B.K., *Political Institutions and Theories of the Hindus*, Leipzig 1922.
- Sarvadhikari, R., *The Principles of the Hindu Law of Inheritance*, Madras, 1922.
- Senart, E., *Caste in India*, tr. Ross, E.D., London, 1930.
- Sengupta, Nilakshi, *Evolution of Hindu Marriage*, Bombay, 1965.
- Sengupta, N.C., *Evolution of Ancient Indian Law*, Calcutta, London, 1953.
- Sharma Brijnarain, *Social Life in Northern India*, Delhi 1966.
- Sharma G.R., *Kusana Studies*, Allahabad, 1968.
- Sharma R.N., *Contemporary Indian Philosophy of Education*, (Hindi) Vinod, Agra, 1972.
- *Indian Ethics*, (Hindi) KNRN, Meerut 1965.
- *Western Ethics*, (Hindi) KNRN, Meerut, 1978.
- *Indian Society and Culture*, Raj Hans., Meerut 1976.
- *Contemporary Indian Society and Social Institutions*, (Hindi). Saraswati Sadan Delhi, 1972.
- *The Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo*, Second Ed., KNRN. Meerut, 1976.
- *Contemporary Indian Philosophy*, (Hindi), KNRN, 1976
- *Indian Psychology*, (Hindi), Anu, Meerut, 1975.
- *Rashtra Dharma Drsta Sri Aurobindo*, (Hindi), Vineet, Meerut, 1979.
- *Sri Aurobindo Ka Sarvang Darshan*, (Hindi), Vineet, Meerut, 1979.
- *Plato*, Vineet, Meerut, 1979.
- *Contemporary Indian Philosophers of Education*, (Hindi), Vineet, 1979.
- *Philosophy of Education*, Vinod, Agra, 1978.
- *History of Social Thought*, (Hindi), Rajhans, Meerut, 1976.
- Sharma, R.S., *Sudras in Ancient India*, Varanasi, 1958.
- *Indian Feudalism c. 300-1200*, Calcutta, 1965.
- *Light on Early Indian Society and Economy*, Bombay, 1966.
- *Aspects of Political Ideas and Institutions in Ancient India*, Varanasi, 1968.

- Sharma, R.S. ed., *Indian Society : Historical Probing*s, New Delhi, 1974.
- Shastri, D.R., *Origin and Development of the Rituals of Ancestor Worship in India*, Calcutta, 1963.
- Singer, Milton, ed., *Traditional India : Structure and Change*, Philadelphia, 1959.
- Singer, M. and Cohn, B.S., ed., *Structure and Change in Indian Society*, Chicago, 1968.
- Singh, Mohinder, *The Depressed Classes*, Bombay, 1947.
- Sinha, H.N., *Sovereignty in Ancient India*, London, 1938.
- Sircar, D.C., *Indian Epigraphical Glossary*, Delhi.
- *Studies in the Political and Administrative Systems in Ancient and Medieval India*, Delhi, 1974.
- Sorokin, P.A., *Social and Cultural Mobility*, New York, 1959.
- Spellman, J.W., *Political Theory of Ancient India*, Oxford, 1964.
- Srinivas, M.N., et. al., *Caste in Modern India and Other Essays*, Bombay, 1962.
- Srinivas, M.N., ed., *India's Villages*, Bombay, 1960.
- Srivastava, Balram, *Trade and Commerce in Ancient India*, Banaras, 1968.
- Sternbach, L., *Juridical Studies in Ancient Indian Law*, Vol. I, Delhi, 1965.
- Sukthankar, V.S., *On the Meaning of the Mahabharata*, Bombay, 1957.
- Trautman, T.R., *Kautilya and the Arthashastra*, Leiden, 1972.
- Upadhyaya, B.S., *India in Kalidasa*, Allahabad, 1947.
- Wagle, Narendra, *Society at the Time of the Buddha*, Bombay, 1966.
- Weber, Max., *The Religions of India*, tr. Gerth, H. and Mertindale, D., Illionis, 1960.
- Silson, J., *Indian Caste*, 1877.
- Yadava, B.N.S., *Society and Culture in Northern India in the Twelfth Century*, Allahabad, 1973.
- Journals, Periodical and Commemoration Volumes etc.*
- Ancient India.*
- Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute.*
- Archaeological Survey of India, Memoirs.*
- Far Eastern Quarterly.*
- Gazetteer of India*, Vol. I. Country and People, Govt. of India, 1965.

Indian Culture.

Indian Historical Quarterly.

Journals of the Economic and Social History of the Orient.

Journal of the Ganganath Jha Research Institute.

Our Heritage.

Proceedings of the Indian History Congress.

Proceedings of the International Congress of Orientalists.

Science and Culture.

Papers

Bailey, F.G., *Closed Social Stratification in India*, *European Journal of Sociology*, 4, 1.107, 1963.

Barnes, J.A., *Marriage and residential continuity*, *American Anthropologist*, 62, 850, 1960.

Berreman, Gerald, D., *Social categories and social interaction in Urban India*, *American Anthropologist*, 74, 567, 1972.

Dalton, George, *Bride wealth versus bride-price*, *American Anthropologist*, 68, 732, 1966.

Dumont, Louis, *The Dravidian kinsnip terminology as an expression of marriage*, *Man*, 53.54, 1953.

——— *Hierarchy and marriage alliance in South Indian Kinship*, Occasional Papers, Royal Anthropological Institute No. 12, London, Royal Anthropological Institute, 1957.

Dumont Louis, *Dowry in Hindu marriage as a social scientist sees it*, *Economic Weekly*, 2, 519, 1959.

——— *Marriage in India*, The present stage of the question, North India in relation to South India : Contributions to Indian Sociology, 9, 90, 1966.

Fortes, Meyer, *The structure of unilineal descent groups*, *American Anthropologist*, 55, 17.

Freed, Ruth and Stanley Freed, *Calenders, ceremonies and festivals in a North Indian village, necessary calendric information for field work*, *South Western Journal of Anthropology*, p. 67, 1964.

Freed Stanley, *Fictive kinship in a North Indian village*, *Ethnology*, II 86-103, 1963.

Freed Stanley and Ruth Freed, *Status and the spatial range of marriages in a North Indian area*, *Anthrapological Quarterly* 46, 97-99.

- Gough, F., Kathleen, *Female initiation rites on the Malabar coast*, The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, 85, 45, 1955.
- *Brahman kinship in a Tamil village*, American Anthropologist 58, 826, 1956.
- Gould, Harold, *The Hindu jajmani system, A case of economic particularism*, South Western Journal of Anthropology, 14, 428, 1958.
- *The Micro-demography of marriages in a North Indian area*, South-Western Journal of Anthropology, 16, 476, 1960.
- *The jajmani system of North India, Its structure, magnitude and meaning*, Ethnology, 3, 12, 1964.
- Harper, E.B., *Two systems of economic exchange in village India*, American Anthropologist, 61, 760, 1959.
- Klass, Norton *Marriage rules in Bengal*, American Anthropologist 68, 4 951, 1966.
- Kolenda, Pauline M., *Changing caste ideology in a North Indian Village*, Journal of Social Issues, 14, 51, 1958.
- *Towards a model of the Hindu jajmani system*, Human Organisation, 22, 11, 1963.
- Leach, E.R., *The structural implications of matrilineal cross-cousin marriage*, Man, 51, 23, 1951.
- *Bride wealth and the stability of marriage*, Man. 53. 179. 1953.
- *Aspects of bride wealth and marriage stability among the Kachin and Lakher*, Man, 57, 50, 1957.
- Leaf, Murray. J., *The Punjabi kinship terminology as a semantic system*, American Anthropologist, 73, 543, 1971.
- Madan, R.N., *The Hindu joint family*, Man, 62. 88, 1962.
- *Is the Brahmanic gotra a grouping of Kin*, South Western Journal of Anthropology, 18, 59-77, 1962.
- Mathur, K.S., *Caste and occupation in a Malva Village*, Eastern Anthropologist, 12, 47, 1958.
- Opler, Morris E., *The extensions of an Indian village*, Journal of Asian Studies, 16, 5, 1966.
- *Recent changes in family structure in an Indian village*, Anthropological quarterly, 35, 93, 1960.

- *Particularization and generalisation as process in ritual and culture*, *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 23; 83, 1964.
- Grans, Martin, *Maximizing in jajmani land*, *American Anthropologist*, 70, 875, 1968.
- Orenstein, Henry, *Death and kinship in Hinduism*, Structural and functional interpretation. *American Anthropologist*, 72, 1357, 1970.
- Pillai, S. Devdas, *The study of age at marriage*, Some neglected issues, *Indian Journal of Social Research*, 12, 194, 1971.
- Pocock, David, F., "Difference" in East Africa, A study of caste and relation in Indian Society, *South Western Journal of Anthropology*, 13, 287.
- *Notes on Jajmani relationships*, *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, 6, 78, 1962.
- Reddy, N.S., *Rites and customs associated with marriage in the North Indian village*, *Eastern Anthropologist*, 9, 77, 1955-56.
- Rowe, William, L., *The marriage network and structural change in a North Indian community*, *South Western Journal of Anthropology*, 16, 299, 1960.
- *Changing rural class structure and jajmani system*, *Human Organisation* 22, 41, 1963.
- Sanwal, R.D., *Bride-wealth and marriage stability among the Khasi Kumoan*, *Man*, 1.46, 1966.
- Singh, Indra, P., *A Sikh village*, *Journal of American Folklore*, 71, 479, 1958.
- Sinha, Surajit, *Scope for urban anthropology and the city of Calcutta*, *Journal of the Indian Anthropological Society*, 5, 1970.
- Vatuk, Sylvia, *Reference address and fictive kinship in urban North India*, *Ethnology*, 8, 255, 1969.
- *A structural analysis of the Hindu kinship terminology*, *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, 3, 1969.
- Yadava, J.S., *Changing family structure in a Delhi village*, *The Anthropologist*, 13, 21, 1967.
- *Factionalism in a Haryana village*, *American Anthropologist*, 70, 898, 1968.
- *Kinship groups in a Haryana village*, *Ethnology*, 8, 494.

AUTHORS INDEX

- Acharya, P. K., 61
 Altekari, A. S., 67,71,76,77
 Aurobindo, S., 1-3,6-11,306,308,398,
 400
 Baudhayana, 69
 Bhagwandasi, 1,3,7-10,17
 Blunt, 66
 Buddha, 7
 Butler, H., 167
 Chatterjee, B.C., 5
 Dange, S. P., 67,71
 Datta, N. K., 26,27
 Datta, R. C., 11
 Dayananda, 307
 Desai, A. R., 150
 Deshmukh, C. D., 317
 Deussen, P., 20
 Dube, S. C., 150,167
 Eisenstadt, S. N., 366
 Gandhi, M. K., 1,3,6-11,37,39
 328,398-400
 Ghurye, G. S., 26,37,41,48
 James, Wm., 3
 Jaiaswal, K. P., 355
 Kane, P. V., 70
 Karandikar, 66,70
 Karve, D. G., 150
 Karve, I., 38
 Keesing, M. F., 130
 Keith, A. B. 24
 Lewis, O., 241
 Maine, 54
 Majumdar, D. N., 39,43,
 62,104,107,108,117,126
 128,137,150,181,341-344
 Mead, 11
 Medhatithi, 69,71
 Nehru, J. L., 20,140
 Panini, 69
 Panikkar, K. M., 36
 Patanjali, 69
 Prabhu, P. N., 38
 Prasad, N., 139
 Opler, M., 167
 O., Malley, 54
 Radhakrishnan, S., 1,3,6-10,306,
 327
 Radim, M., 76
 Ramanuja, 11
 Ramkrishna, 1,3,7-10,306
 Rao, V. K. R. V., 30
 Rivers, 74,104
 Rizley, 107
 Roy, M. N., 306-398
 Roy, Raja Rammohan, 11, 287
 Saxena, R. N., 117
 Schopenhauer, 11
 Shankar, 7,11,327
 Srinivas, M. N., 37,150,157,
 239,241,336,337,
 341,343
 Tagore, R. N., 1,3,6-10,306
 357,398-400
 Taylor, E. B., 129,
 Vivekanand, 1,3,6-10,306
 357,398-400
 Valvalkar, 26
 Vatsyayana, 7,22,61
 Vigyaneshwar, 70
 Weber, Max 107
 Westermarck, 73
 Yajnavalkya, 69-71
 Yaskacharya, 17
 Yogendra Singh, 317

SUBJECT INDEX

- Ashram System,
 - Meaning, 20-21
 - Types, 21-22
- Bureaucracy in India, 394
 - Organization, 395
 - Reforms, 396
 - Importance, 397
- Casteism,
 - Definition, 34
 - Causes, 34-35
 - Consequences, 35-36
 - Remedies, 37-38
- Christian Society, 139
 - Family, 140
 - Marriage, 141-142
 - Divorce, 142
 - Marriage Act, 143
 - Divorce Act, 144
 - Status of Women, 145-146
- Clan,
 - Meaning, 108
 - Characteristics, 109
 - Types 109
 - Functions, 109-110
 - V/s Caste, 110-111
 - V/s Tribe, 111
- Contemporary Social
 - Change, 305
 - Nature and Directions, 305
 - Change in Social
 - Philosophy, 305-306
 - Change in Social
 - Institutions, 306-307
 - Change in Caste System, 307
 - Change in Jajmani
 - System, 307-308
 - Industrial Change, 308-309
 - Social Causal Factors, 309-312
 - Economic Causal Factors,
 - 312-314
 - Tradition and Modernity,
 - 314-330
 - Planning 315
- Democratization.
 - Meaning, 384
 - Characteristics. 385
 - In India, 386-388
 - Factors of Success, 388-390
- Obstacles, 390-391
- Hindu Caste System,
 - Definition, 26-27
 - Characteristics, 27-28.
 - Favourable Conditions, 29-30
 - Unfavourable Conditions,
 - 30-31
 - Trends, 32
 - Future, 33-34
- Hindu Family,
 - Characteristics, 51-52
 - Chief Ideals, 52
 - Changes in Ideals 53
- Hindu Marriage,
 - Aims, 60-61
 - Traditional Forms 61-62
 - Modern Changes 62-64
 - Endogamy 64-66
 - Exogamy, 66-69
 - Sagotra, 69
 - Saprarvar, 69-70
 - Anuloma, 71
 - Pratiloma, 71-72
 - Hypergamy, 72
 - Polyandry, 74-75
 - Polygamy, 73-74
 - Child Marriage, 75
 - Problems, 75-78
 - Widow Remarriage, 76
 - Dowry, 76-77
 - Divorce, 77
 - Social Legislation, 78-81
 - Hindu Code, 78-81
 - Effects of Hindu Code, 81
- Hindu Women,
 - Status in Ancient Society, 83
 - Status in Middle Ages, 84
 - Status in Modern
 - Times, 84-85
 - Present Change, 85-86
 - Demands of, 86-87
 - Rise in Status, 87-88
 - Consequences of
 - Education, 89-90
- Indian Culture,
 - Salient Features, 1-6
 - Spiritual Goal of Life, 2
 - Synthetic Approach to

Religion, 2-3
Unity in Diversity, 4-6
Indian Spiritualism,
Social Implications 11-12
Indian Social Philosophy, 7-10
Integral Approach 8
Intuitive Method, 8
Integral Perspective, 9
Harmony, 9
Idealism, 10-11
Reasons for Undermining,
12, 16
Joint Family,
Meaning, 53
Features, 53-54
Social Legislation, 54-56
Merits, 56-58
Defects, 58-60
Karma,
Doctrine of 24
Muslim Marriage,
Meaning, 91
Essentials, 91-92
Irregular, 92-93
Procedure, 93
Types, 93-94
Rights and Duties, 95-96
Meher, 96-97
Divorce, 97-98
V/s Hindu Marriage, 98-100
Status of Women 101-103
Modernization,
Meaning, 366
Characteristics, 366-367
Impact in India, 367-370
Problems, 370-371
Modern Elite,
Rise of, 376
History, 377
Causes, 378
Reform Movements, 379-380
Political Movement, 380-382
National Movement, 383-384
Nationalism in India,
Meaning, 372
Rise of 372-373
History, 373-376
Panchayats,
History, 198-199

Functions, 201-203
Comparison, 203-204
Role, 204-208
Suggestions, 208-209
Politicization,
Meaning, 391
Various Spheres, 392-394
Rinas, 23, 24
Rural Community
Development, 221-228
Bhoodan, 228-231
Social Education, 231-235
Distinctions, 235-238
North Vs. South 238-240
Indian Vs. Western 241-249
Rural Cultural Life 180
Festivals, 181-193
Sanskaras, 193-198
Rural Panchayats, 198-209
Rural Problems, 210-217
Rural Reconstruction, 217-221
Rural Religion, 166-168
Gods and Goddesses, 168-169
Beliefs, 169-171
Superstitions, 172-177
Moral Beliefs, 173-174
Influences, 174
Dynamism, 175
Temple, 175-180
Rural Society, 147-149
Study of 150-151
Characteristics, 151-154
Change, 154-155
Factors of Change, 155-158
Methods of Change, 158-160
Spheres of Change, 160-166
Sanskaras, 24, 26
Sanskritization,
Characteristics, 335
Definition, 336
Ideals, 336-337
Examples, 337-339
Political Elements, 340, 341
Economic factors, 341
Criticism, 342
Process, 343, 344
Western Impact, 344, 345
Secularization,
Meaning, 358

- Areas of Influence, 359-362
- Causes, 362-364
- Social Reform Movements, 250
 - Bhakti Movement, 250-255
 - Shaivism, 255-257
 - Vaishnavism, 257-260
 - Buddhism, 261-271
 - Jainism, 271-279
 - Modern Renaissance, 280-288
 - Brahmo Samaj, 287-301
 - Ramkrishna Mission 301-303
 - Muslim Movement, 303-304
- Tradition and Modernity,
 - Meaning, 314
 - Extent, 315-316
 - What is tradition, 317-318
 - What is Modernity 318-319
 - Tradition Vs. Modernity, 319-320
 - Traditionalism in India, 321-328
 - Synthetic Approach, 328-329
 - Relevance of Traditional values, 330-333
 - Modernity in India, 333-335
- Tribal Culture,
 - Trends, 132-133
 - Influences, 133-134
- Tribal Marriage,
 - Meaning, 113
 - Form, 113-116
 - Economic, 116
 - Polyandry, 117-120
 - Polygamy, 120-121
 - Exogamy, 121-122
 - Endogamy, 122
 - Divorce, 123
- Tribal Problems, 134
- Tribal Religion,
 - Characteristics, 127-128
 - Mana, 128
 - Animism 128
 - Animatism, 129
 - Naturalism, 129
 - Rebirth, 130
 - Magic, 130
 - Totem and Taboo, 131-132
- Tribal Welfare, 135-137
- Tribe,
 - Meaning, 104
 - Characteristics, 105-106
 - Vs. Hordes, 106
 - Vs. Caste, 107
 - In India, 111-113
- Trivarga, 22-23
- Tribal Youth Dormitory,
 - Meaning, 124
 - Characteristics, 124-125
 - Gotul, 125-126
 - Weakening, 127
- Untouchability,
 - Definition, 39
 - Disabilities, 39-41
 - And Caste, 41-42
 - Causes, 42-43
 - Remedies, 44-49
 - Suggestions, 50
- Westernization,
 - Meaning, 345
 - Characteristics, 346-347
 - Consequences, 347-348
 - Carriers, 348-349
 - Western Influence, 350-355
 - East V/s West, 355-358

012218
 K 601-

NATIONAL LAW SCHOOL OF INDIA
UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

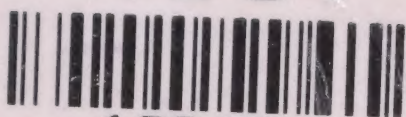
NAGARBHAVI, BANGALORE-560 072

This book must be returned by the date stamped below

F12	Issued date <u>8/10/02</u> Due date <u>11/10/02</u> ID No <u>264</u> Signature <u>[Signature]</u>
982	396
982	24/12/02
F3	1453 24/7/02
11/4/02	1953, 25/07
F3 15/10 30/09 392	1953, 20/7

P.T.O.

NLS



12246

301 SRJ

Cl. No. SHH

Author Sharma,

P. P.

301

SRJ

012,246

Indian Society

Ram Nath Sharma

This book covers the syllabi of undergraduate and post graduate degrees in Sociology in Indian universities particularly in the papers entitled : Indian Society, Indian social institutions, Contemporary Indian society, Contemporary Social Change in India, Indian sociological concepts, Indian society and culture, contemporary Indian society and culture etc. It has been planned as an ideal text book for Indian universities both from the point of view of subject matter and the method of treatment. It is analytic in presentation and integral in evaluation. It includes all relevant subjects but avoids all irrelevant and unnecessary details. The bibliography at the end of the book is meant for those who aim at detailed study.

Dr. Ram Nath Sharma, M. A.; D. Phil. (Alld), D. Litt. (Meerut), has been teaching post graduate students and guiding research at Agra and Meerut universities for more than two decades. At present he is reader and head of the dept. of Post graduate studies and research at Meerut College. He was elected sectional president at XI session of All India Darshan Parishad and III session of U. P. Philosophers Association. Chief Editor of Research Journal of Philosophy and Social Sciences : Director, Sri Aurobindo Research Institute, Dr. Sharma is a prolific writer and an authority on Sri Aurobindo's Thought. He is author of more than six dozen books and an equal number of research papers. Among his most important works are : *Social Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo*, *Principle of Sociology* *Indian Society* etc.

Rs. 60.00

MEDIA PROMOTERS & PUBLISHERS PVT. LTD.